



JUMP START

**HARRIERS
BACK ON
ARK ROYAL**



FROZEN ASSETS

**EXERCISES
IN FJORDS**

NARVIK TRIUMPH

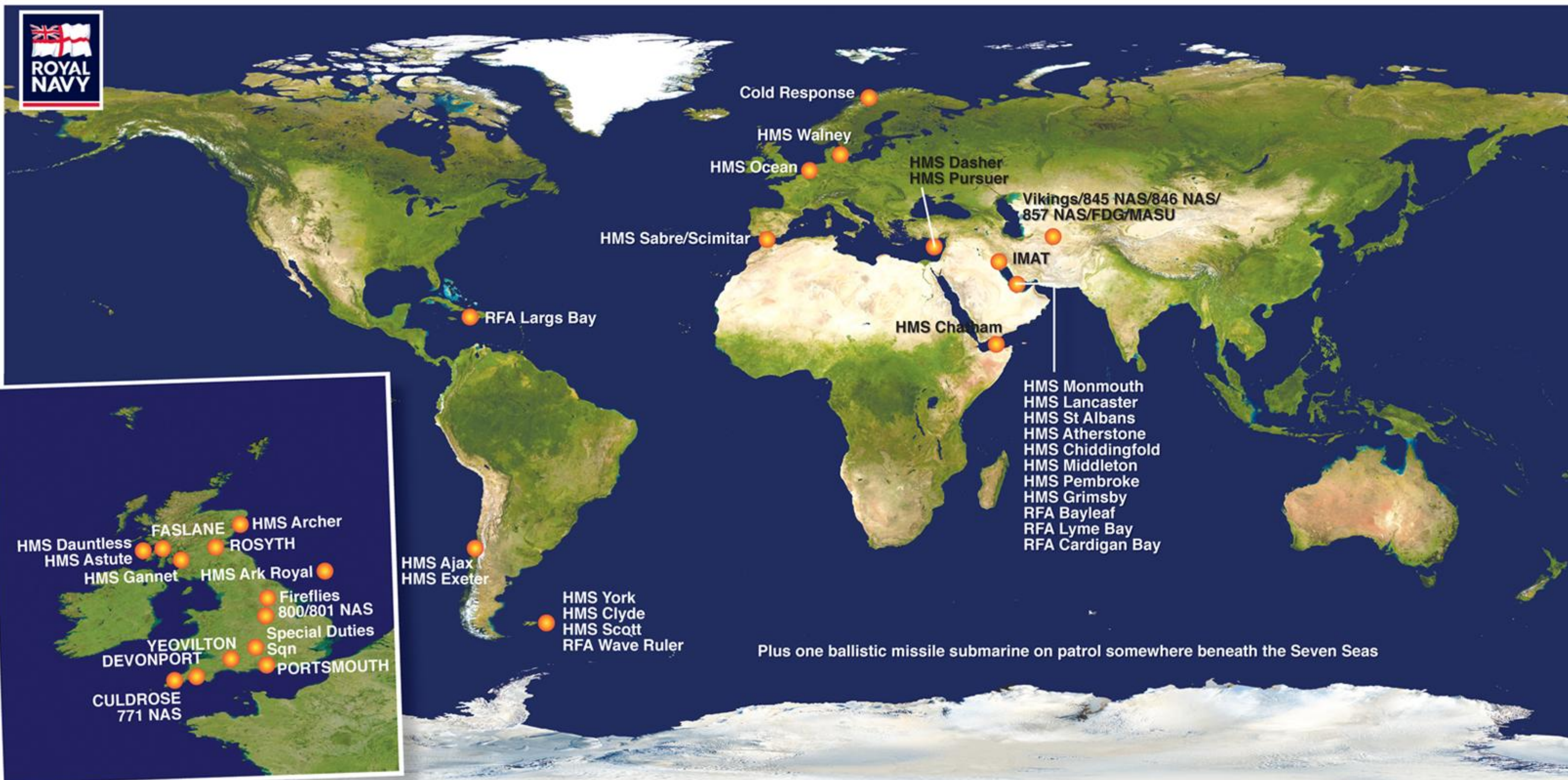
**ANNIVERSARY
SUPPLEMENT**



FUTURE ARMOUR

In-tandem for the first time, £2bn of Naval firepower... Hunter-killer submarine HMS Astute and Type 45 destroyer HMS Dauntless on trials in the Firth of Clyde. The exercises saw the submarine conduct her first dive. See page 13

Picture: BAE Systems



Fleet Focus

A FLEETING glance at the map above shows the concentration of Naval effort at present lies east of Suez...

...so obviously we'll begin around round-up of affairs nautical in Scotland.

And why not, because the men and women of **HMS Gannet** deserve it; the search and rescuers haven't just beaten existing records for call-outs/lives assisted, they smashed them in 2009 (see page 6).

Gannet aren't the only rescuers in the news: **RFA Wave Ruler** rushed to help an ill sailor, 300 miles off the Falklands. The tanker served as a 'lily pad' for an RAF SAR Sea King based in the South Atlantic islands (see page 5).

And in Haiti **RFA Largs Bay** has delivered several weeks of food to thousands of people cut off by January's terrible earthquake (see pages 10-11).

Right, now we can head to the Middle East. **HMS Atherstone** has been hunting mines (but found a fishing trap); **HMS Monmouth** and **St Albans** traded places in Bahrain; **HMS Lancaster** enjoyed more than a fortnight in Dubai; **RFA Lyme Bay** played host to British and UAE marines; and **HMS Chatham** has taken over as flagship of NATO's anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden (see pages 8-9 for a round-up).

The other focal point of naval activities in foreign waters this winter has been northern Norway and the latest round of Cold Response exercises, aimed at testing NATO forces' response to conflict, in a, er, cold climate. Your players this year included **HMS Ocean** and **Albion**, 845 and 847 NAS, 45 Cdo, **RFA Wave Knight** and **Mounts Bay** (see pages 24-5).

Ships didn't have to go to Norway to find a bit of snow and ice. In home waters, **HMS Archer's** winter programme has been upset by the weather; her ship's company found the basin which is her home filled with growlers (see page 4).

HMS Walney's been called upon to take part in a short-notice deployment with NATO's minehunting forces (see page 4).

In home waters, **HMS Astute's** conducted her first true dive (see page 13), while in the North Sea flagship **HMS Ark Royal** played host to the Naval Strike Wing for the first time in more than five years (see pages 14-15).

HMS Westminster has emerged – literally – from refit in Devonport, eased out of the frigate shed to begin trials (see page 6).

Also emerging from overhaul in Devonport is hunter-killer **HMS Triumph**, back at sea after five years and £300m of work (see opposite).

HMS Sultan witnessed the end of an era, or rather end of an ERA, the very last class of **artificers** – tiffies in everyday Jackspeak – to pass out, bringing the curtain down on a trade born in the days of the ironclads (see page 34).

Another era ending is the rule of the Firefly, the basic trainer for RN pilots for the past two decades. It made its final flight with **703 NAS** (see page 7).

Meanwhile at Boscombe Down... the **Special Duties Squadron** is training Afghan helicopter pilots (see page 16).

The recent powerful earthquake which struck Chile resonates loudly in the history of the RN; 70 years ago, the men of **HMS Exeter** and **Ajax** helped the people of Concepción when the port was devastated by a shock. *Their story is told on page 23.*

That's not the only echo carried across seven decades. Sailors and Royal Marines on Cold Response paused to pay their respects to the men of 1940 who died in the two **Battles of Narvik**. The story of those brave sailors is told in our commemorative supplement (see the eight-page pullout in the centre pages).



The big bang practice

... BECAUSE it's quite clear from this impressive image (captured by LA(Phot) Dave Jenkins of FRPU East) that the lads of Southern Diving Unit 1 have the theory well and truly mastered.

Disappearing in a column of water, sand and mud several hundred feet tall, this is the demise of a German parachute mine unearthed by dredgers working in Portland Harbour.

The detonation of the 720kg (1,600lb) wartime device was delayed for two days by adverse weather.

Finally, the five-strong dive team from Devonport were able to raise the mine with a specially-designed lifting bag, then tow it outside the breakwater at Portland.

And then... boom. "It was a difficult operation – mainly because of the weather," said CPO Kas Kasapi.

"We were there for three days, diving at night and through the day. In the end, though, a good result – there was no damage and everyone was safe."

■ MEANWHILE up the road in Portsmouth... A four-strong team from the Fleet Diving Squadron, based on Horsea Island is heading to Afghanistan right about now, replacing comrades who've spent the past six months dealing with unexploded ordnance and improvised explosive devices – the latter are the principal threat to the safety of Allied troops on the ground in

Helmand.

PO Ward 'Sharky' Peers, LS Lee Jackson and ABs Phil Brierley and Ian Rowe replace their comrades PO Jai 'Digger' Gardner, LS Ian 'Higgy' Higgins and ABs Les Cockerton and Chris 'Jumper' Collins in theatre.

The divers are chiefly based in Camp Bastion working with 21 Field Squadron Royal Engineers.

But their mission also takes them out to forward operating bases in Sangin, Banji and Kajaki, and they will join soldiers on foot patrols.

If that's not enough, the team will be called upon to train troops in the Afghan National Army on the art of searching for, identifying and disposing of explosive ordnance.

The new team has spent the past six months working alongside the Royal Engineers to prepare for their Afghan role.

"Now that we've completed our specialist training with the Army, we feel we're fully prepared and are keen to get out there, complete our tasks to the best of our ability – and then return to our usual duties with the Navy," said Sharky.

"Our operation's entirely land-based which is somewhat unusual for us as an RN team, but we realise that training the Afghan Army is vital in helping the country get back on its feet, so our presence will be worthwhile."

Holland days for Ocean

THE men and women of the Mighty O let their (admittedly fairly short) hair down in the Netherlands after five frozen weeks in the fjords.

The reward for **HMS Ocean** after her exertions in northern Norway on Exercise Cold Response (see the centre pages) was an operational stand-off in Europe's busiest port, Rotterdam.

From there it's but a short train journey to the Dutch metropolis of Amsterdam... and a sizeable proportion of the helicopter carrier's ship's company took advantage of the proximity to sample the sights.

Others preferred to reflect on past sacrifices by visiting the Operation Market Garden battlefields and cemeteries around Arnhem, a battle immortalised by the book/film *A Bridge Too Far*.

The more athletic members of the Mighty O's ship's company rose early on the second day of the visit.

Twenty-nine sailors joined more than 10,000 competitors in Den Haag for a half marathon and 10k run.

Cdr Dave Mahony was the highest-placed Ocean runner in the half marathon, finishing 342nd out of a field of 6,601 with a time of 1h 25m.

Cdr Steve Ward was the first Mighty O over the line in the 10k race, placed 690th out of a field of 5,331 athletes on 47m 54s.

The return journey from Norway also saw Ocean call in at Rosyth to offload troops and equipment.

Although the stop-off was brief, it was long enough for some of the ship's company to be given a tour of Babcock Marine's facilities to see progress on the future carriers.

"Both rudders and the two massive aircraft lifts are almost complete, but the highlight of the visit was the opportunity to step on board a section of the ship's hull," said Lt Cdr David Pickles, Ocean's senior air traffic controller.

"Constituting a mere 0.33 per cent of the completed vessel, the sheer size of the section gives a clear impression of just how big the ship will be."

Sail in Triumph

ORDINARILY we don't get too excited about a T-boat sailing out of Plymouth Harbour.

But (a) it's a really nice picture (by LA(Phot) Vicki Benwell of FRPU West) and (b) the last time HMS Triumph was at sea, John Paul II was Pope, London was bidding – but had not yet been selected – to host the 2012 Olympics and the Royal Navy was gearing up to celebrate the bicentennial of Trafalgar.

(The year was 2005 if you were wondering...)

That was the year that HMS Triumph was handed over to the team from DML in Devonport Royal Dockyard for the final refit and refuel of a Trafalgar-class submarine (the official jargon is Long Overhaul Period (Refuel)).

And on the fourth day of March 2010, the team at Devonport – now Babcock, who bought out DML – were done with Triumph and the boat put back to sea.

In between, aside from changing the name of their company, the engineers, technicians and shipwrights performed quite a lot of work on the 19-year-old T-boat.

Apart from refuelling the reactor, they carried out some 30,000 jobs, overhauling, revamping, tweaking or replacing some 75,000 items of equipment. A new command and control system was installed, so too the latest sonar 2076 bow, flank and towed array systems, there was an upgrade for the Tomahawk cruise missile control system, as well as Triumph's comms and fire-fighting kit.

In all, it took £300m and 2,750,000 man hours to refit Triumph; the work will help carry the boat through to the end of her career – she's due to be the final Trafalgar-class boat to pay off in 2022.

And while the Babcock/DML team were toiling away, so too her ship's company. As deeps began to rejoin the boat in earnest last year, there was considerable training to undergo.

The control room team spent a lot of time on the Talisman trainer, which replicates a submarine's operations centre, while their marine engineering counterparts were put through their paces on the manoeuvring room simulator.

And every man of Triumph was put through the damage control trainer to deal with the challenges of fire and flood.

The last tick in the box prior to returning to sea was a 'fast cruise', which is actually neither. The boat pretends to be at sea, but is actually alongside, and the taskmasters of FOST throw all manner of problems at the ship's company to see how they cope.

There are now three months of sea trials for Triumph before she resumes her work with the Fleet in earnest.



Candles and cake for HMS Sceptre

WHEN not enjoying luxury ice cream (see pages 18-19) the lads of HMS Sceptre like nothing better than a slice of cake.

Good job the submarine's chefs, sorry, logisticians (catering services (preparation)) have been busy then...

The veteran hunter-killer – Britain's oldest active submarine – marked her 32nd birthday (February 14) doing what she does best: "dived, radio silent, ready to strike from the deep when required," according to her weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Alex Cross.

Mercifully the only weapon being wielded was a knife as the oldest member of the crew, CPO McCavera (52), and his youngest oppo, 19-year-old ET Howe, cut into a submarine-shaped birthday cake.

Sceptre is two-thirds of her way through a seven-month tour of duty in the Indian Ocean as part of the RN's 'continuous east of Suez' deployment.

She stopped off in Turkey on her way East and since passing through Suez the boat and her crew have enjoyed a break in the UAE, as well as a lot of exercises with US naval forces in the region, including co-ordinated Tomahawk cruise missile training.

The boat emerged from a RAMP (Revalidation and Assisted Maintenance Period) overhaul last April, since when she's added 28,213 miles to her odometer and spent 226 days away from her home port of Faslane, spending 78 per cent of those days (176 by our reckoning) at sea.

This latest deployment concludes with Sceptre heading for South Africa, then into the South Atlantic and finally home to the Clyde.

She's due to pay off in December.

Punishments for Superb grounding

MISREADING a depth on a chart led to submarine HMS Superb striking a pinnacle in the Red Sea, a court-martial in Portsmouth heard.

Despite suffering from engineering issues, Superb was ordered to make haste for operations in the Gulf, the boat cut a dog-leg out of its route through the Red Sea.

In doing so, her path crossed an underwater pinnacle some 80 miles south of the Suez Canal – but three officers misread the obstacle's depth on their charts.

They believed the peak of the seamount was 732 metres below the surface. In fact, it was 600 metres higher – and HMS Superb struck it at 16kts in May 2008.

The impact slowed the boat to just three knots and caused significant damage to Superb's bow and sonar kit, although there were no casualties.

Superb was forced to surface and then return to the UK following the accident and did not deploy again. She paid off as planned in September 2008.

The hearing in HMS Nelson was told that since the grounding, new procedures had been introduced to ensure depths were re-checked when a new route was plotted.

CO Cdr Steve Drysdale admitted neglecting to perform his duty. Officer of the watch Lt Cdr Andrew Cutler pleaded guilty to failing to supervise the plot officer properly and Superb's navigator Lt Lee Blair admitted failing to take into account all the dangers in or near the planned movements of HMS Superb.

Cdr Drysdale was reprimanded, to remain on record for three years; Lt Cdr Cutler was severely reprimanded for three years; and Lt Blair reprimanded for two years.





Carrier piece takes shape

YET another piece of the giant jigsaw which is Britain's future carriers has slotted into place with the first steel cut in Portsmouth for HMS Queen Elizabeth.

Defence secretary Bob Ainsworth and First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Mark Stanhope pressed the button to begin work on a 6,000-ton segment of the 65,000-ton warship at the BAE Systems facility in the naval base.

Over the coming months shipwrights, steelworkers, engineers and technicians will construct a section 70m long and 40m wide (229ft and 131ft for those of you who prefer imperial measurements) which will house machinery, stores, switchboards and some living space for her 1,450 crew and embarked air group.

Once completed, the section will be shipped to Rosyth where a dry dock has been enlarged so the various segments, provided by six yards around the UK, can be built.

"With eighty per cent of the world's land mass within 500 miles of the ocean, the carriers will provide unparalleled access and flexibility. They are vital joint assets for the future of defence," Admiral Stanhope told guests at the cutting ceremony.

"The two ships of the Queen Elizabeth class will be the largest and most powerful warships ever built for the UK, each equalling four acres from which to project airpower anywhere in the world."

BAE Systems Surface Ships's boss Alan Johnston added: "This is a very proud day for our workforce here in Portsmouth and comes on the back of our work on the Clyde, where another large part of the carrier's hull is already taking shape."

"The designing and building of ships of this magnitude is a massive engineering feat and a real testament to skills harnessed in our industry across the UK."

Portsmouth becomes the fifth yard to begin work on Queen Elizabeth as part of the £4bn replacement carrier programme (yards in north Devon, Newcastle, Glasgow and Rosyth are already beaver away). One fifth of that sum will be spent in the carrier's home port.

Some sections of the flight deck have already been delivered to Rosyth while a bow section was due to leave the Appledore yard in north Devon for the Forth as *Navy News* went to press.

ExCeLent show for Cattistock

HMS Cattistock headed to the capital to demonstrate her prowess in mine warfare to the world.

The Portsmouth-based warship spent three days at the ExCeL centre in London's Docklands, where nearly 100 exhibitors from two dozen lands were displaying the latest marine kit.

Staged every two years, Oceanography International is billed as the world's premiere showcase of marine science and technology.

And right at the cutting edge of said technology is Seafox, which has been introduced across the RN's mine warfare fleet in place of the old 'yellow submarines' – remote-controlled mine disposal vehicles.

Seafox is much cheaper – and quicker – to operate than the old submersibles. Small drones are dispatched by the mother ship to destroy mines at depths of more than 300 metres (1,000ft).

A live camera feed allows the ops room team on the ship to identify a suspicious object, while Seafox's fitted charge can be used to destroy the mine (and itself) to neutralise the threat.

As well as showing what Seafox is capable of, the ship's divers also carried out demonstrations during the conference.

Aside from industry experts, the Hunt-class ship hosted Sea Cadets and potential Senior Service recruits.

Dee-icer needed



SPRING, according to a few lazy TV commentators, has sprung. But not in Scotland.

Yes that's ice. And yes that's HMS Archer going nowhere.

The time. 7.30am, March 1 2010. The place. Aberdeen Harbour. "Trust us," says Archer CO's Lt Michael Hutchinson. "There was not a green shoot in sight."

Actually, appearances are deceptive in this case. That is ice (with a topping of snow), but the sea in harbour is not actually frozen.

What you see here are "bergy bits and growlers" carried down from the Cairngorms by the River

Dee... which empties into the North Sea in Aberdeen.

River ice or not, it closed the harbour. Indeed, Archer's lost several sea days this year courtesy of the coldest winter in three decades.

The ship's company returned from Christmas leave to find two inches of ice on the P2000's upper deck and the berthing lines frozen to their cleats.

Archer is the RN's most northerly vessel serving Aberdeen's universities. She celebrates her

25th birthday this year.

"She's looking good for her age – despite the cold. Her old Rolls-Royce tank engines seem to like the cold," says Lt Hutchinson.

"That's not the case for her ship's company who've had to learn to wrap up warm and gulp down their wets whilst they're still hot. A wet left any longer than a few minutes is likely to have frozen in the sub-zero conditions."

Luckily, the Archers are a hardy bunch and won't let a trifle like snow and ice deter them. So far

this year, the boat has spent a fortnight on the Forth hosting Sea Cadets, students, the Combined Cadet Force, reservists, civic leaders, prospective matelots and Scottish Secretary Jim Murphy. The latter joined Archer to escort HMS Illustrious up the great river for refit.

Later this month – when things have hopefully warmed up a *soupcón* – the P2000 heads out on Exercise Hunt Ness, her Easter deployment through the eponymous loch, down the Caledonian Canal and on to Oban and the Western Isles... then back again.

Picture: Lt Michael Hutchinson



Rumours of my demise...

DON'T write the good ship Walney off just yet.

She may be earmarked for deletion this year (one of two RN vessels to face the axe under a shake-up of the Forces announced at the end of last year), but the mine counter-measures vessel was called upon to deploy at short notice to northern European waters with NATO.

And it would have been rude to not answer the call...

So the Faslane-based Sandown headed off for five months to join NATO's Standing Mine Counter-measures Group 1.

And after a battering from the winter storms (freezing conditions, gale force winds, rough seas, lots of ice), the dive team plunged into the icy waters of the North Sea to deal with a WW2 mine packed with 500lb of explosives off Lowestoft.

A short time later and with a 4lb charge attached to the ageing weapon, the mine was no more, detonated in a controlled fashion.

The hunt for 'legacy ordnance' has become a mainstay of NATO mine warfare operations in recent years under the banner of Exercise Beneficial Co-operation.

There are five ships currently attached to the NATO force, led

by Poland's Cdr Krzysztof Jan Rybak aboard his flagship ORP Kontradmiral Xawery Czernicki – named for the wartime leader executed by the Soviets at Katyn – allowing for some interesting interaction among the multinational group.

So there's been some testing of officer-of-the-watch manoeuvring skills, gunnery firings, simulated attacks by air and sea, a little towing. The net result, says Walney's Commanding Officer Lt Cdr Des Donworth, is that the group has "proved itself a capable and compatible unit".

The force has most recently been working off the Danish coastline with German, Swedish, Danish, Belgian, Dutch and Polish forces.

And when in Denmark, why not pay a visit to the capital... which Walney did. As well as enjoying the sights of one of Europe's more attractive cities, there was the chance to catch some Six Nations action courtesy of local hostilities.

After playing hard, it was back to working hard, next stop Poland.

"The transit into the Baltic has provided some breathtaking scenery, although the dense fog lining our route south somewhat hampered the view," said Lt Cdr Donworth.



Viking leader awarded MC

A COMMANDO who saved numerous lives under fire has been awarded the Military Cross – one of the nation's highest awards for gallantry.

WO1 Matthew Tomlinson has been recognised for his bravery when his five-strong convoy of Vikings from 3 Commando Brigade's Armoured Support Group was subjected to concentrated enemy fire near Bashran, Helmand Province, in May last year.

The lead Viking in the column was partly blown up by a mine, causing the remaining vehicles to halt. That prompted a sustained attack from insurgents using rocket propelled grenades.

Ignoring his own safety, the senior non-commissioned officer left his Viking and ran 50 metres to the stricken vehicle, which was on fire, helping to evacuate the troops in the back.

Not only did the troops have to avoid the flames and the possibility of the 4,000 rounds of ammunition exploding in the damaged Viking, but they had to dodge Taliban fire and deal with the ever-present danger of a second mine.

During this intense fire-fight, WO1 Tomlinson directed return fire at the insurgents and attended to the seriously-injured driver of the damaged Viking with the help of soldiers from the Queen's Royal Hussars who were being escorted by the Vikings.

While the fire in the Viking was spreading and ammunition inside was exploding, they continued to administer medical care to the driver using the battered vehicle as cover.

WO1 Tomlinson continued to risk his life by searching for the Royal Marine who had been manning the gun turret on the damaged Viking. He found the turret had been blown some distance away with the Marine still inside, but sadly dead.

"I know that if my Viking had been hit, then I know the lads would have acted in exactly the same way," the senior NCO said of his award.

"They were effectively a band of brothers because they worked so well together. I was in charge of their welfare, morale and fighting effectiveness for seven months and I am still very proud to have served with them. The ranks of the Armoured Support Group are the real heroes."

WO1 Tomlinson is now serving with 1 Assault Group Royal Marines in HM Naval Base, Devonport, as a landing craft advisor to 300 Marines.

He has already served in Afghanistan and Iraq and was awarded the Conspicuous Gallantry Cross for his actions in the latter theatre.

More Operational Honours, page 32

Block goes

GONE from the Portsmouth skyline is a tower block which has dominated the approaches to the city for four decades.

The Edgar Evans block on the north end of Whale Island has been home to senior ratings and non-commissioned officers based at HMS Excellent since the mid-60s.

But since last spring, they've enjoyed superior accommodation in a new mess, which features en-suite cabins and top-of-the-range facilities more in keeping with the needs – and expectations – of 21st Century senior rates.

Diggers moved into the old block in late February and began to pull it down.

When opened by the Duke of Edinburgh back in 1964, the block was hailed as accommodation of the future and was the first to be named for a senior rating (PO Evans died on Capt Scott's ill-fated expedition to the South Pole) rather than an admiral.



TUTTs out in Portsmouth

THE first replacement tugs – or ‘marine service vessels’ in modern parlance (although somehow we think the old name will stick...) – are in Portsmouth now with the rest of the revamped fleet in place by the year’s end as part of a £1bn overhaul of support craft for the fleet.

In all, there will be six ‘tugs of the future’ on the Solent, plus two pilot vessels, a work boat and a 1,500-tonne fuel lighter.

They’re needed because the existing workhorses of the naval bases are getting long in the tooth and because the next-generation warships are considerably larger than their forebears.

Type 45s are twice the size of the 42s they replace, while the future carriers are three times the displacement of the current Invincibles.

Here comes the science bit. The old tugs are TUTTs (twin-unit tractor tugs); their successors are ASDs and AFDs (Azimuth Stern/Azimuth Forward-Drive).

Which will probably leave most of you scratching your heads. In a nutshell, the new craft are powered by propellers at the stern or bow instead of the cycloidal drive in the middle of the boat. It means they’re faster and can pull heavier weights.

It also means tug crews need to undergo a substantial training package – which explains the considerable tug action over recent weeks in Portsmouth Harbour (there’s also a fair bit of instruction in the classroom as well).

“It’s a learning curve, but it’s one that we’re enjoying,” said Pat McFadyen, Marine Services Superintendent in Portsmouth Naval Base.

“We are changing the whole fleet in Portsmouth so we can look forward to easily coping with the size of the new capital ships.”

A new fleet of 29 support vessels are being provided across the RN as part of the £1bn Future Provision Marine Services contract.

Two per cent pay increase

EVERY man and woman in the Naval Service up to the rank of brigadier/commodore receives a two per cent pay rise as of the first of this month.

Whitehall accepted the recommendations of the independent Armed Forces Pay Review Body as part of a £193m package of improvements in salaries and allowances across the three Services.

The pay rise means that an Able Seaman/Marine will earn a minimum of £17,486 in the next 12 months, and possibly as much as £28,940 depending on experience, qualifications and responsibilities.

A newly-qualified lieutenant/Royal Marines captain will receive between £37,916 and £45,090.

The salary changes do not include medical/dental officers and senior officers; their pay is dealt with by separate review bodies.

Full details of the pay rises can be found in our 2-6 section (see pages 30-31).

Other changes to pay and allowances include an increase in the operational allowance for deployed personnel on a standard six-month tour of duty. It goes up £260 to £2,380.

Unpleasant living allowance will now cover personnel living and operating from forward operating bases/patrol bases in Afghanistan.

The minimum entitlement threshold for Longer Separation Allowance (LSA) has been reduced from ten to seven days continuously separated.

And provisions for LSA on certain RN vessels are being extended to include all Service personnel operating under similar arrangements in the field or at sea.

Picture: PO ‘Dutchy’ Holland, HMS York



High seas, high drama

BATTLING high seas and headwinds gusting to over 40 mph, tanker RFA Wave Ruler prepares to receive an RAF search and rescue helicopter at the height of a 600-mile mercy dash.

Wave Ruler and destroyer HMS York picked up a distress signal from a trawler some 300 miles south-east of the Falklands and set off immediately; a sailor had suffered a suspected burst appendix.

At that range the fishing vessel, from the Republic of Kiribati in the Gilbert Islands, South Pacific, was beyond the range of the Mount Pleasant-based RAF Sea King.

The solution? To use Wave Ruler’s flight deck and refuel half-way to its destination...

which is exactly what happened.

Despite the heavy seas and strong southerly headwinds, Wave Ruler succeeded in topping up the Sea King using the tried-and-tested method of Helicopter In-Flight Refuelling.

With the Sea King refuelled, both ships and the helicopter continued to head south until the Sea King reached the trawler and winched off the sick crew member.

Aided by strong tail winds, it was not long before the helicopter had delivered the casualty to Port Stanley hospital.

Wave Ruler has only just arrived in the Falklands – the first time one of the Royal Fleet Auxiliary’s fast fleet tankers patrolled the South Atlantic islands.

Ruler has replaced RFA Gold Rover on the first leg of a deployment which will keep her away from the UK until late next year.

The first three months of that lengthy deployment sees Wave Ruler supporting operations by British forces in the South Atlantic, notably HMS York and the Falklands’ constant guardian HMS Clyde, as well as visiting South Georgia and ultimately the South Sandwich Islands.

Once her stint is up around the Falklands, Wave Ruler will swap the South Atlantic for the North as she supports the war against drug trafficking in the Caribbean and provides assistance in the wake of any natural disaster to strike the region.



Kent’s speed date

WHAT do you get if you cross a speedway team, a giant football top, some warfare officers and new pieces of kit?

Why, HMS Kent of course.

We’ll begin with the Lakeside Hammers who rode aboard Kent (yes, they took one of their bikes up the gangway and even on to the forecastle) for a photoshoot (pictured above with ET(WE)s Fiona Farrell, Joe Allen and Oliver Ramage by LA(Phot) Dean Nixon).

The Essex-based riders – current holders of the Elite League KO Cup, speedway’s FA Cup – are sponsored by the Senior Service because (a) youngsters interested in the sport are the sort of people the RN’s looking to attract and (b) it gets the Navy lots of exposure on Sky Sports... watched by the sort of people the RN’s looking to attract.

A quick change of sports and a giant (50ft) football shirt was carried aboard and laid out on the flight deck (it just fitted).

The oversized top – signed by World Cup winner George Cohen, legendary keeper Peter Shilton and stalwart defender Stuart ‘Psycho’ Pearce – is doing the rounds of England to drum up support for this summer’s footie fest.

The frigate will have to follow the tournament, which begins on June 11, from afar... something she can do thanks to some additional wizardry.

“We’ve recently been fitted with a new satellite TV service that works at sea as well as alongside. Everyone will be able to watch each match live, no matter where the ship is,” said weapon engineer officer Lt Cdr Peter Pipkin. It’s the responsibility of his department to make sure it works, so no pressure there then...

(With apologies to Welsh, Irish and Scottish members of Kent’s ship’s company whose teams won’t be appearing in the finals sadly...)

Kent spent nearly three months alongside in Portsmouth for maintenance following her Gulf deployment, which ended just before Christmas.

So the first few days back at sea – in the hands of her new CO Cdr Nick Cooke-Priest – saw equipment trials and training exercises to ensure that the ship was fit to continue with the operational programme she has ahead of her this year – including more kit tests and principal warfare officer training.

Busy Baggers bag award

NO Naval, Royal Marine or Fleet Air Arm unit contributed more to the front-line effectiveness of the Senior Service in 2009 than the Airborne Surveillance and Control Sea Kings of 849, 854 and 857 Naval Air Squadrons.

That’s quite some claim to make.

We’re not saying it.

Nor are the three sister squadrons based at RNAS Culdrose in Cornwall.

No, that comes from (almost) the very top: Maj Gen Garry Robison RM, the RN’s Chief-of-Staff (Capability).

He presented the inaugural Naval Capability Trophy to senior bagger, Cdr Matt Avison, Sea King Force Commander.

The award has been introduced to honour the unit – or individual – that has contributed most to the delivery of Naval capability in the past 12 months.

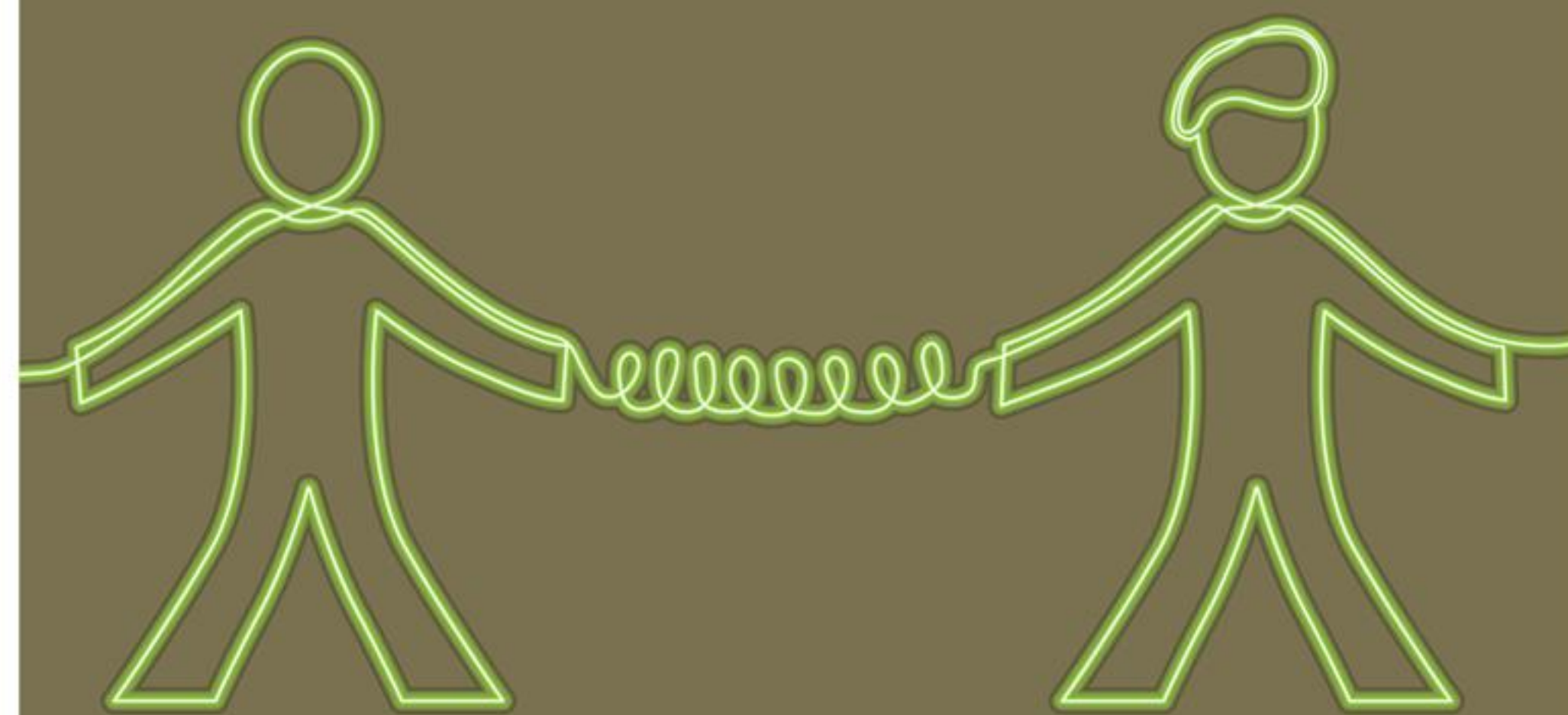
In the case of the ASACs, they’ve been operating in an entirely new theatre (for them) since last spring: the skies of Afghanistan.

They underwent considerable training for their Afghan mission (a lot of it provided by their fellow Sea King fliers and Culdrose natives, 771 NAS) before using their radar and surveillance kit to positive effect over Afghanistan.

There, in the words of their citation, the baggers are “at the forefront of the UK’s main effort on Operation Herrick”.

The commendation continues: “Through grit, unswerving dedication and the ability to meet significant issues head-on – and with solutions – the Sea King ASAC Force is delivering crucial operational capability to the joint force Coalition in Afghanistan.”

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£200K shaved off fuel bill

A STRING of energy-saving measures – including hi-tech computer software – helped RN and RM establishments to cut their annual energy bills by £200,000.

Some 700 ‘Smart meters’ have been fitted in numerous buildings at the Yeovilton and Culdrose air stations, Royal Marines bases at Chivenor, Norton Manor, Bickleigh, Turnchapel, Lympstone and Instow, plus the Commando gunners at The Citadel in Plymouth.

Every night the meters send information about the use of oil, gas and electricity to energy boffins – the Co-ordinated Energy Bureau – who use computer software to work out what fuel’s being used, and what’s being wasted.

In some cases, the analysts spotted savings which could be made by changing the way a building’s occupants work. One site in Stonehouse has cut fuel use by four fifths thanks to the advice of the energy experts.

Elsewhere, the data collected helps the boffins decide where new kit was needed.

Combined heat and power units have been installed at the swimming pool in Lympstone, loft insulation has been fitted to buildings at Chivenor, roofs and pipes at Culdrose insulated, and a high-efficiency boiler is being fitted at the Cornish air base.

The result has been a £200,000 saving – and a considerable reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from the various establishments.

Across the Forces, the MOD wants to see carbon emissions cut by 15 per cent by next year.

Record rescuers

THE BUSIEST has become even busier.

The men and women of HMS Gannet set four search and rescue records in 2009 as their Sea Kings were airborne at least once every day.

The helicopters attended 447 emergencies in all – 65 up on 2008.

The result was that 378 people owe their lives to – or were helped in some way by – Gannet’s team in 2009.

All that helped the unit to set four records: busiest UK helicopter search and rescue unit, record for most people rescued in a single year, first unit to break the 400 call-out barrier in one year, and first unit to set new call-out records for three consecutive years.

Gannet accounts for 20 per cent of the call-outs by all eight military search and rescue units in Britain (two RN, the rest are RAF).

The unit is responsible for 98,000 square miles of land and ocean covering northern England, Northern Ireland, and Scotland from the English border to Ben Nevis and Inner Hebrides to Edinburgh.

One in five scrambles involves transferring medical cases from Scotland’s isolated western islands to the mainland for treatment, while two in five rescues involved accident victims – road smashes or more usually climbers and walkers – who needed flying to hospital.

Among the more memorable missions of 2009 were the rescue of a 16-year-old girl who fell from her bicycle into a raging river, guiding a stricken Cessna pilot to safety, and lifting a pensioner to safety when her car became trapped by flood waters.

“Absolutely everyone – from the aircrew to the engineers, weather forecasters, office staff, ground crew and support staff – plays their part in ensuring that there’s a helicopter ready to respond 24 hours a day, whatever the call may be,” said Gannet’s CO Lt Cdr Debdash Bhattacharaya.

“It’s a phenomenal sustained effort aimed at supporting the people of Scotland, Northern Ireland and northern England who can feel a little safer in the knowledge that we’re ready to help at a moment’s notice.”

Given just how busy Gannet is, it’s hardly surprising that two of her aircrew have passed the 600 and 700 call-out milestones (observer Lt Cdr Martin ‘Florry’ Ford and PO Marcus ‘Wiggy’ Wigfull respectively).

Lt Cdr Ford clocked up 288 call-outs in just two years at Gannet (he was also heavily in demand in his 771 NAS days at Culdrose and earned the Air Force Cross for his role in rescuing victims of the 2004 Boscastle floods in Cornwall). PO Wigfull is Gannet’s senior aircrewman who’s spent 13 years of his Service career in SAR, during which time he’s been awarded the Queen’s Commendation for Bravery in the Air for plucking three people from a stricken yacht off the Ayrshire coast.

UK SAR statistics only go back to 1983. Since then, Gannet’s helicopters have been scrambled on 5,519 occasions with 4,286 people rescued/helped (as of New Year’s Eve 2009).



Out of many, one...

AND just in case you thought 2010 would be any different for the Gannet team...

In an epic nine-hour sortie, the fliers delivered a four-strong medical team – plus incubators – to the side of twin premature babies in Stornoway, 200 miles from base in Prestwick.

Before they could fly to the Outer Hebrides, the Gannet team of Lt Andy Ellis, Capt Michael ‘Jack’ Frost RM, Lt Cdr Martin ‘Florry’ Ford and PO Taff Ashman had to pick up the medics and those two incubators (each weighing 320lbs) from Glasgow Airport and stop on Skye to refuel.

The medics worked with Stornoway Hospital’s neo-natal unit to ensure that the twins, born at 34 weeks, were stable, before they were loaded on to the Sea King in their incubators, for return to Glasgow’s Southern General Hospital (pictured above).

The little boys, sons of Fiona and Peter McDonald, were born weighing 4lbs 13oz and 5lbs 15oz respectively. After spending several days in hospital they returned safely to Stornoway.

“It was a good result from our perspective and it’s great to hear that the babies are doing well – which is the most important thing; that’s what it was all about – a happy ending,” said pilot Lt Ellis.

“It’s a real pleasure to be able to help like this.”

‘set for east of Suez again

AFTER her exertions in the Far East supporting last year’s Taurus amphibious deployment, HMS Somerset’s about to head through Suez once more.

Since Christmas, the Type 23 frigate has been hard at work preparing for her deployment to the Middle East and Gulf.

And work in peacetime doesn’t come much harder than a spot of Basic Operational Sea Training with the taskmasters of FOST.

The first stages of BOST are general purpose, testing the ship and her 180 men and women in every challenge they could face.

The later weeks with the Devonport-based trainers are customised, focusing specifically on the day-to-day tasks the frigate will be expected to perform once operations begin – notably board and search.

As 4,200 tons of sovereign territory, Somerset will be expected to fly the flag for the mother country around the world.

So one strand of FOST tests a ship’s ability to ‘meet and greet’ the locals.

The locals in question were the good folk of the small Cornish town of Fowey, where the frigate spent a weekend.

CO Andrew Burns hosted a reception and capability demonstration for local guests as well as a lunch for the Lord Lieutenant of Cornwall and Fowey’s mayor.

Local Sea Cadets had the opportunity for a tour of the ship and on the Sunday the ship received over 700 visitors (that’s roughly one in three of the town’s inhabitants).

Somerset will deploy after a spot of maintenance in Devonport and Easter leave.

Westminster benefits from capital investment

GENTLY emerging from Devonport’s cavernous frigate shed appropriately enough is one frigate of the Type 23 class, Her Majesty’s Ship Westminster to be precise.

A year-long £11m refit is over for the ‘capital ship’ which has returned to sea for trials ahead of schedule.

You last read about Westminster’s deeds in the spring of 2009 when she was helping the Indians hunt HMS Trafalgar during the annual Konkan exercises (held for once in UK waters).

Since then, Trafalgar has lowered the White Ensign for good while Westminster decamped to Devonport (she’s normally based in Portsmouth) and was handed over to the good folk of Babcock.

They’ve done rather a lot of work on the 18-year-old warship in the intervening period.

For a start they removed the old Seawolf trackers and installed fresh ones as part of the

upgrade for the missile system which effectively doubles its range; so the theory goes, the ship could intercept a cricket ball traveling at Mach 2 more than 20 miles away.

Engineers also ripped out Westminster’s brain, her command system which is designed to cope with threats in the air, on the surface and underwater, and put in a new one – DNA(2) – as well as fitting the ship with the Forces’ new e-mail/internet and internal communications network.

The stern received a ‘go faster spoiler’ – better known as a transom flap – the bulbous main gun was lifted off... and the angular ‘Kryten’ lowered in its place, 40 kilometres (25 miles) of cabling were laid, 300 new items manufactured and 1,100 items taken to workshops in Devonport for an overhaul before being returned.

Westminster’s hull was blasted back to bare metal, a large hole cut in the side and a new main

gearwheel slotted into place to restore the port gear box to 100 per cent power.

Next a coating of Intersleek paint was applied – “a modern, exceptionally slippery, low friction anti-fouling paint,” explains marine engineer officer Lt Cdr Bob Beaver. In a nutshell, it stops organisms in the oceans sticking to the hull and increasing the ship’s drag.

All in all, quite a works package. 200,000 man hours to be precise, making Westminster “the most capable Type 23 frigate in the Fleet”.

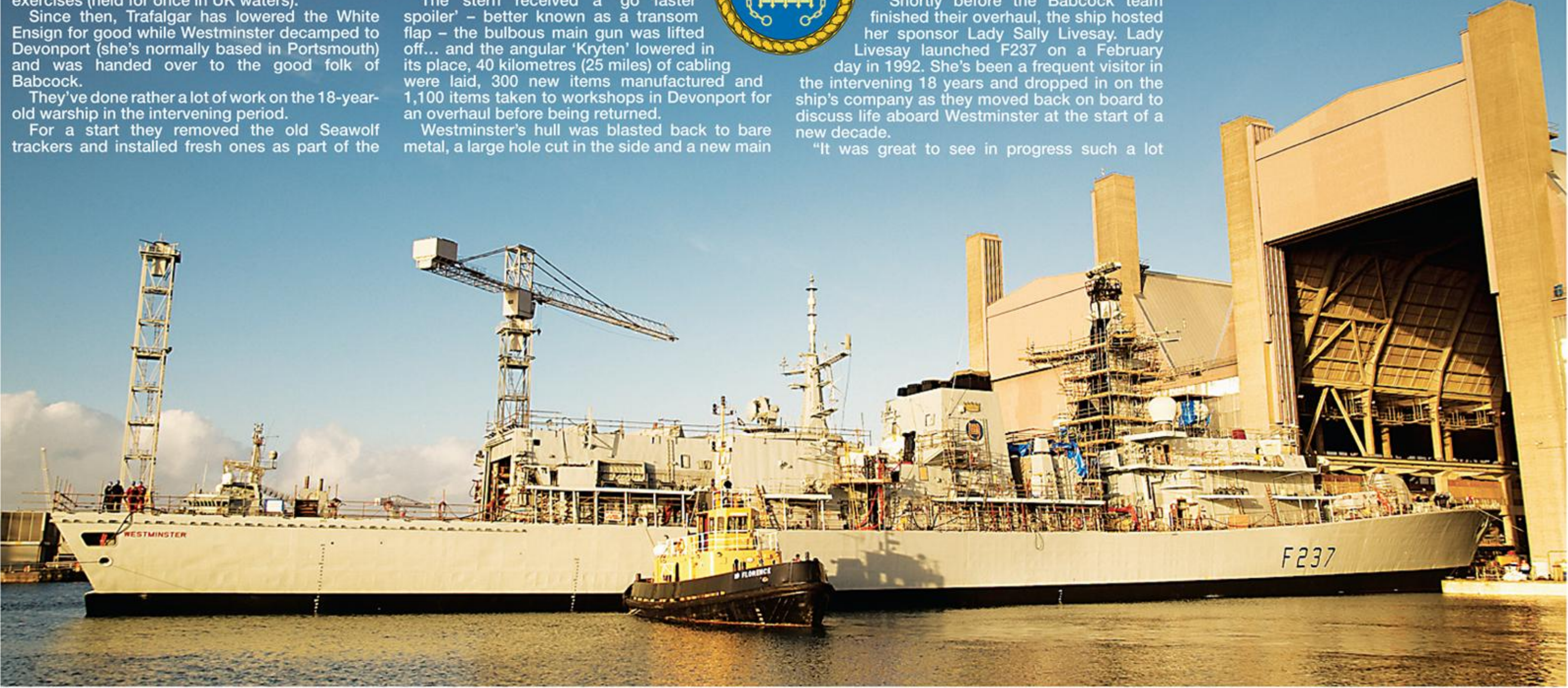
Shortly before the Babcock team finished their overhaul, the ship hosted her sponsor Lady Sally Livesay. Lady Livesay launched F237 on a February day in 1992. She’s been a frequent visitor in the intervening 18 years and dropped in on the ship’s company as they moved back on board to discuss life aboard Westminster at the start of a new decade.

“It was great to see in progress such a lot

of the hard work that has been going on to get Westminster back to top fighting form – and great too to find that everyone seemed so enthusiastic, positive and determined: very much the spirit of the ship that I have come to recognise and appreciate,” she said.

The ship’s now in the throes of eight weeks of intensive sea trials before she officially returns to the Fleet next month.

Picture: LMEA ‘Crash’ Evans, HMS Westminster



Final flight

WITH barely a cloud scarring the winter sky, this is the very last formation of naval aviators to grace the skies of Lincolnshire in their distinctive Firefly trainers.

For the past two decades, this brightly-liveried small plane has been the mainstay of pilot training, teaching an estimated 900 naval aviators the fundamentals of flight – irrespective of whether they are 'fast jet jockeys' or, more usually, rotary wing fliers.

But its day in the sun is done. The Firefly is being succeeded by the ubiquitous Grob, already

in service with the RAF and 727 NAS training squadron in Yeovilton (although it's painted white, making it rather more difficult to see than the bright yellow 'birds').

And now the Grob can be found too at Barkston Heath in Lincolnshire, home of 703 NAS where pilots undergo five months of training on the ground and in the air, covering everything from the principles of flight, meteorology and navigation to handling, instrument flying and formation flying.

To mark the Firefly's passing, there was an eight-plane formation over the Lincolnshire countryside.

And the very last naval aviator

to enjoy the Firefly experience? Lt Matt Harding, whose final flight in the trainer on February 11 didn't go entirely to plan.

Unfavourable weather played havoc with his planning for the last sortie. When he did get airborne, however, he was treated to an impromptu display from the Red Arrows, practising over Scampton Field.

"I was fortunate enough to see the Red Arrows fly past in formation trailing their trademark red, white, and blue smoke before they broke off to do aerobatics," he said.



On his return, Lt Harding was due to land at the former Royal Naval Air Station Cranwell (apparently it's known by a different name these days...) but problems there meant a diversion to RAF Waddington (15 miles away).

After a long exchange with Air Traffic Control he was finally able to return home to Barkston

Heath...

...and there was a nice surprise back on the ground. Lt Cdr Tony Hills, 703's Commanding Officer, and the three other final Firefly students marked their

aircraft's retirement with a bottle of bubbly.

The Slingsby Firefly story begins in the 1990s at RAF Topcliffe in North Yorkshire, then home to the Joint Elementary Flying Training School (JEFTS), used by RAF and Fleet Air Arm pilots.

Back then, the two-seat Firefly was painted white and blue and powered by a 160hp engine.

Since then, JEFTS has moved to Barkston Heath, not far from Cranwell; the Army has joined in the training; the RAF have gone their separate way; JEFTS has become DEFTS (D for Defence); and the 160hp blue and white Firefly has become the 260hp yellow and black Firefly (yellow

makes it easier to spot from above, black from below).

Up to its retirement, the aircraft was responsible for training around 130 Fleet Air Arm and Army Air Corps pilots a year – 900 Naval, 1,100 Army fliers throughout its lifespan, including Lt Henry Wales (aka Prince Harry) – under the tutelage of military and civilian instructors.

"The sun may have set on the Firefly, but the skills and ethos taught to the many students who were fortunate enough to experience this sporty little aircraft will live on for the rest of their flying careers," enthused S/Lt Robert Powell, one of the final four naval students.

Picture: Martin Fox, DEFTS



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● HMS Atherstone is silhouetted against the Gulf sky as she scours these waters for mines
Picture: LA(Phot) Stu Hill



DAWN IN THE ARABIAN GULF...

"THERE is nothing better than getting your head wet on an early morning mine-hunting dive," says Lt Trev Orton.

Of course, the fact that the water temperature rarely drops below 24°C and his colleagues back in the UK are diving "with undersuits up to the hilt" makes that early morning dip all the more pleasant...

Our round-up of all things RN east of Suez begins with the sun slowly breaking the perfect line of the horizon and one object disturbing the glassy waters of the Arabian Gulf.

That 'object' is HMS Atherstone's sea boat, carefully being lowered into the calm waters and yet another search for a mine.

So it's down the ladder once more for Lt Orton, the Crazy A's XO, and his fellow frogmen.

Their ops room comrades have picked up something out of place on the sea bed.

This is not a drill. This is not an exercise. It's a genuine contact of interest.

It's the warm-water experience of Britain's mine counter-measures vessels – HM Ships Atherstone, Chiddingfold, Grimsby and Pembroke are currently based in Bahrain – which has made their presence in the Gulf a crucial part of the continued safety of merchant shipping in the region.

Atherstone's ship's company (Mine Counter-Measures Squadron 2 Crew 8 under the rotation system used to sustain operations in the Gulf) is one of the more experienced mine-warfare teams, 'enjoying' their second tour of duty in Bahrain in less than a year.

Although much of the kit may have changed down the years, the core tasks of a Royal Navy diver have not: to go underwater and tinker with high explosives – to place little bombs on bigger bombs to make one huge bomb that will hopefully do less damage in the long-run.

The team in the boat slowly make their way towards the target. The sonar operators back in Atherstone's operations room use a simple, but effective, system of

voice and visual communications to guide the divers on to the contact which they can see on their sonar screens.

There is a slurping sound as the diver enters the water and leaves the surface, descending until his shipmates lose sight of him a few seconds later, heading towards the unknown target.

He indicates that the contact has been found and this is relayed to the ship from the boat.

Shortly afterwards the diver returns to the surface and the boat returns to the ship: the contact had been identified successfully – a fishing trap.

It may not have been dangerous but once again the system had been proved and another sub-surface contact can be classified as safe...

Disregard, search on...



MEANWHILE, SOMEWHERE EAST OF KUWAIT...

STAFF College Sea Days typically mean a grey fog somewhere off Plymouth or Portsmouth, a few bangs from the 4.5in gun, some jinking to avoid an attack from low-flying Hawks, that sort of thing.

Clear skies, calm seas, F18s there are not.

Unless you're HMS Monmouth in Kuwait...

The Kuwait Joint Command Staff College is regarded as the pre-eminent centre of military learning in the region. It's modelled on its British equivalent at Shrivenham... which organises the annual Sea Days to give Army and Air Force officers a greater understanding of the RN's business.

So it's not entirely surprising that the Kuwaitis mimic the British sea days – although they don't usually have a Type 23 frigate to play with.

The two-day demonstration really did have it all as 90 students – most of whom had never been to sea before – joined the Black Duke to witness 48 hours of non-stop action.

Monmouth's boarding team carried out, er, boardings, with the ship's clubz, LPT Howard Peplow, playing the role of an awkward dhow skipper with aplomb, while the ops room

team showed how to fend off air attack when two Kuwaiti F18s were sent against the ship.

Blackbird, the frigate's Merlin helicopter, showed her panoply of skills, while Kuwaiti Pumas carried out winching drills on to Monmouth.

"I thoroughly enjoyed the hospitality that Monmouth extended to us," one of the Kuwaiti students told the Black Duke's CO Cdr Tony Long.

"Coming from an Army background I have never been on a warship before and after this experience I have a better understanding of how the Navy operates and the capabilities it can offer."

Mission accomplished, then.

While the Kuwaiti students were enjoying life aboard the Black Duke, the frigate's Royal Marines boarding party were enjoying life with the Kuwaiti Coast Guard.

The commandos from FPGRM spent 48 hours training and carrying out simulated boardings with their hosts.

"This was a highly-valuable 48 hours – the Royal Navy extended a warm welcome to key nations and introduced them to the flexibility of maritime power, its relevance to the joint environment and the support that air and land units can expect from a frigate such as Monmouth," said Cdr Long.

After another stint around the Iraqi platforms which the Black Duke has been helping to guard during the winter, it was on to Bahrain for the final time this deployment...



AND IN BAHRAIN...

WAITING for Monmouth in the Gulf port was her relief, HMS St Albans, which has the 'pleasures' of a Gulf spring and summer ahead of her.

After a fairly rapid passage through the Med with brief stops in Gib and Souda Bay, Crete, the Saint passed through Suez and briefly joined the international anti-piracy mission in the Gulf of Aden before slipping through the Strait of Hormuz and into the Arabian Gulf.

While the Saint's command team discussed impending operations around the Iraqi oil terminals with

their colleagues from Monmouth, the ship's company hit the sports fields of Bahrain.

There were defeats for the netball and football sides (the latter went down 1-4 to a local side), but the rugby squad ensured there was no Bahraini clean sweep. Two tries from ET(ME) 'Knocker' White ensured a 10-5 victory for the matelots.

Not to be outdone, the Type 23's runners headed on to the streets of Bahrain not once but twice, joining local hash house athletes. Buoyed by the races, the runners plan more 'hashing' during future port visits.

Which will be some time off, for St Albans is now back at sea and patrolling those platforms. To ensure she does so to the very highest standards expected of her, mobile FOSTies sailed north from Bahrain with the ship.

The Commander Mobile Sea Training and his team regularly leave the UK behind to 'drop in' on deployed RN vessels and do what FOSTies do best: put a ship's company through very rigorous paces.



AND A STONE'S THROW FROM ABU DHABI...

IN HER relatively short life so far RFA Lyme Bay has grown used to the sight and sound of marines in full kit stomping up and down her wide passageways or stairwells.

Just not marines from the United Arab Emirates.

But a good 125 UAE naval infantry joined their British counterparts on the amphibious support ship for Exercise Sea Khanjar (Dagger) IV.

Green berets from the Fleet Protection Group and RMR units in Scotland, Bristol, Merseyside and London provided the British element of the training, aimed at fostering a closer understanding of the two nation's elite amphibious forces – and their kit.

The UAE Marines are a considerably smaller force than the Royals (one battalion with around two dozen landing craft).

So they were understandably chuffed (technical term – Ed) to have a 16,000-ton toy to play



● Not a cloud in the sky for HMS St Albans' Merlin, Lola, as she practises winching drills
Picture: LA(Phot) Steve Johncock



● HMS Lancaster's boarding team inspects a dhow in the Gulf of Aden
Picture: LA(Phot) Tel Boughton

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the meze

with as the two marine forces geared up for a beach landing west of Abu Dhabi.

But before you can walk, you have to learn to crawl.

So first up there were the basics to master for both sides: boat drills, getting into and out of landing craft, dealing with capsized RIBs, the bread and butter of amphibious operations, before weapons training and fire team tactics on the ranges of Al Hamra, plus a cliff assault.

"The opportunity for both groups of marines to work on a ship like RFA Lyme Bay is second-to-none," said Cdr Mike Paterson, Commander of the UK Amphibious Task Force.

"Purely from the fact of living onboard a different nation's ship, the working methodology to the different ways and means of embarking and disembarking troops provided a fantastic way of building on the cross-training already conducted.

The two weeks of Sea Khanjar IV are just the prelude to several exercises planned between British and UAE naval forces this year.



IN THE BUSTLING METROPOLIS OF DUBAI...

SOWHAT do you do if you've got 17 days to kill in Dubai?

Well, allow the men and women of the good ship *Lancaster* to explain.

The frigate's mid-deployment break allowed man and machine to take a breather after the exertions of anti-piracy/security patrols in the Gulf of Aden and Indian Ocean.

For the ship, there was some much-needed TLC: one gas turbine to change, the other requiring maintenance. The engineers didn't stop there: the starboard stabiliser, chilled water plants and diesel generators all

needed some work, and there was a fresh coat of paint to apply all over the Red Rose warship. It was Day 17 when the work was completed (thanks to a little help from Portsmouth's Superintendent Fleet Maintenance team and local contractors – you have to give Lancaster's marine engineers a little time off...).

There was a little work to do for the logistics department too. They were trying out a new-style 'solid support pack' of scan.

Two chacons of food were shipped from the UK, allowing the ship's company to enjoy some of the more traditional British products not readily available in the Middle East.

Mercifully, the stay in the UAE metropolis was not all work.

Two groups from Lancaster took advantage of the weather, location and facilities to undertake some adventurous training across the border in Oman, where hiking, climbing, kayaking and mountain biking activities awaited them.

In Dubai itself, there was the chance to play 'soccer' against the USS *Cleveland*.

The assault ship boasts three times more sailors than Lancaster. Fortunately, they know very little about the beautiful game and were dismissed 12-0.

Indeed, to drum up some decent opposition, Lancaster took on the one side they knew would offer a challenge: themselves.

The junior rates took on the senior rates... and youth triumphed over experience, 7-3.

Just down the road from Dubai, the ship's rugby team were in action in the Sharjah 10s tournament.

Playing some excellent rugby against some semi-professional sides, the sailors reached the semi-finals of the contest where they were knocked out by the Abu Dhabi Harlequins.

So far, so good. Good performances in sports which are bread and butter to Britons. But now a curveball: Gaelic football.

The ship's visit to Dubai coincided with the Gulf Gaelic Games, a two-day celebration of everything Irish organised by the ex-pats of the Dubai Celts.

The tournament is well-known in sporting circles, with teams travelling far and wide to compete. They have the added advantage of actually having played Gaelic football before... unlike the Lancastrians.

So after a quick lesson in the rules of the game, the sailors took to the field hoping that enthusiasm would make up for lack of enthusiasm.

Er, no. But they almost drew their final encounter; a late – and we're told 'lucky' goal – condemned them to a third defeat.

"Lancaster's trip to Dubai was a success, the ship looks like new and she's back at sea on patrol," said Commanding Officer Cdr Rory Bryan.

"The ship's company are a little poorer but well rested and ready to complete the rest of the deployment."



AND FINALLY IN THE GULF OF ADEN...

IT'S TWO for one in the Gulf of Aden.

No we're not talking supermarket offers but international naval task forces.

It's farewell to NATO's Standing Maritime Group 1 in 'Pirate Alley'...

...and hello to Standing Maritime Group 2, led by the Royal Navy's Cdre Steve Chick aboard his flagship *HMS Chatham*.

And if you think there's a distinct feeling of déjà vu about this, well you're right.

Just a few months ago, the commodore was in charge of SNMG2 on anti-piracy operations in these waters, using a Type 22 frigate as his flagship.

Except that last autumn it was Cornwall, now it's her sister leading the effort.

Up and at 'Em counts the USS *Cole*, Turkey's *Gelibolu*, Greece's *Limnos* and Italy's *Scirocco* in her force.

Their task, like the departing ships of SNMG1, is to ensure the safe transit of shipping through the Gulf of Aden 'transit corridor' – a stretch of water used by upwards of 25,000 vessels every year.

Because these waters are so busy and because of the proximity of Somalia, they have proven a rich hunting ground for modern-day pirates, until the world finally sat up and took notice a couple of years ago.

Despite a concerted effort to halt brigandage off the Horn of Africa – there are US-led task forces, a European Union group, ships from China, India, Japan, South Korea, as well as the NATO force all committed to the mission – as of mid-March, seven merchant ships and 143 sailors were still being held for ransom by pirates on Somalia's eastern coast.



● Trading places... HM Ships *Monmouth* and *St Albans* in Bahrain as the former comes home and the latter takes up Operation Telic duties

Picture: LA(Phot) Stu Hill



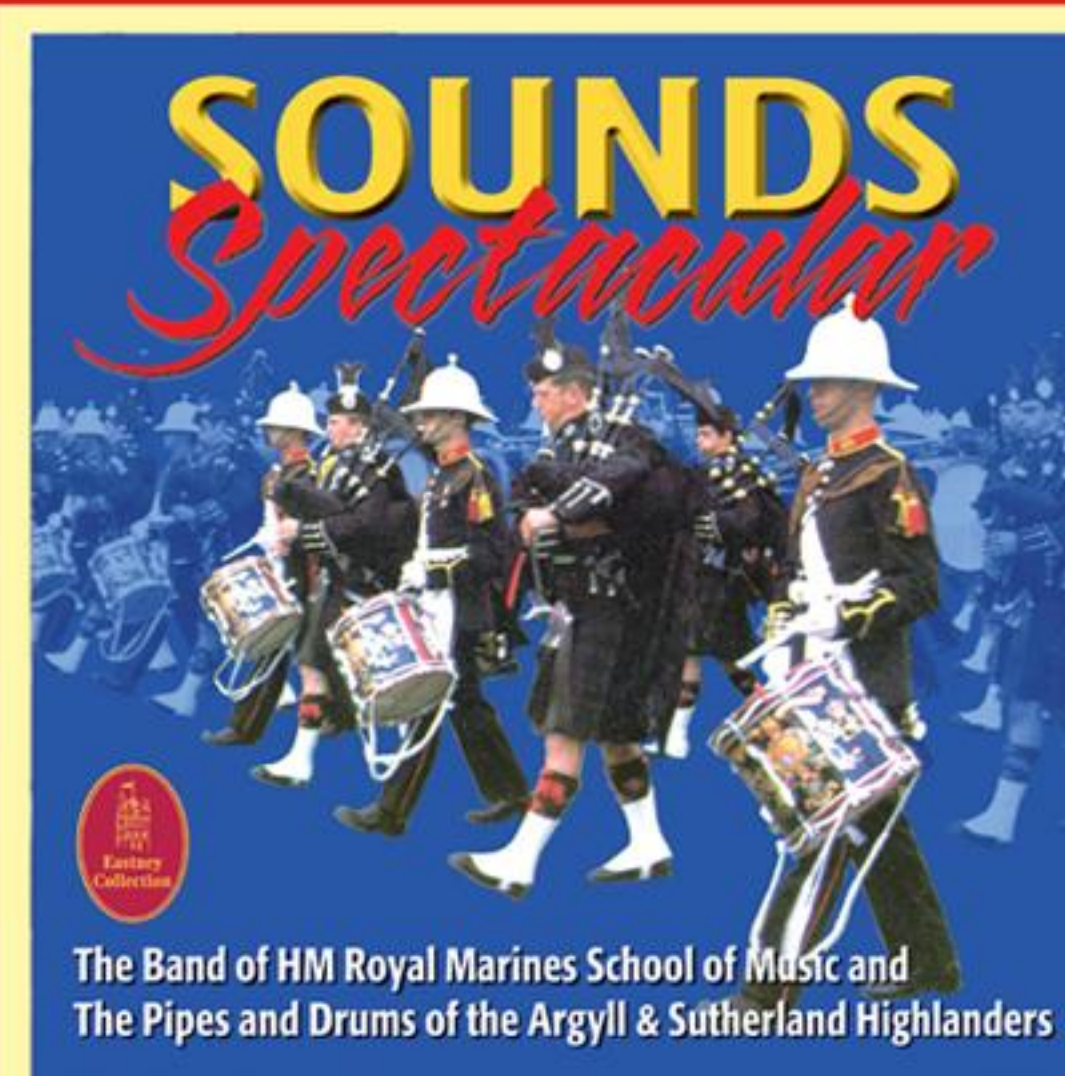
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● SNMG2 flagship *HMS Chatham* leads *TCG Gelibolu* (left), *USS Cole* (right) and *HS Limnos* at the rear (not pictured is *ITS Scirocco*)

Picture: PO(Phot) Owen King, RN Photographer of the Year



● Never break the chain... Locals in Anse-à-Veau help soldiers and sailors from RFA Largs Bay unload one month's supply of food and (bottom) Lt Cdr Richard Walters and youngsters take a breather in the Caribbean heat



A chain of

A HUMAN chain hurriedly passes food ashore in a remote Haitian village – the first substantial delivery to their cut-off community in nearly two months.

Villagers, soldiers, sailors. All chip in to transfer the essentials of life from ship to shore, then up a clay path to a church hall in the fishing village of Anse-à-Veau.

The food – enough to support 6,600 people for four weeks – comes courtesy of one of the few vessels in Haitian waters capable of such a mission: RFA Largs Bay.

Her Mexeflote powered raft can reach places no other ship or boat is able to.

Even it couldn't come right up to the beach in the shallow waters of Anse-à-Veau, some 60 miles west of the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince.

Since the January 12 quake which devastated this already-impooverished land, the fishing community has largely been cut off from the rest of the country.

The destruction caused by the terrible seismic shock has been compounded by mudslides. The result: until Largs' arrival, the

people of Anse-à-Veau relied on occasional air drops of food.

And so 275,000 ready meals, more than 30 tonnes of rice, six tons of beans, in excess of 200 boxes of corn soya blend, 100-plus boxes of vegetable oil, and 13 bags of salt were provided by the UN's World Food Programme for delivery to Anse-à-Veau... duly delivered by the Royal Fleet Auxiliary during a four-day relief operation.

Normally the loading and discharge of cargo is solely down to the soldiers of the 17 Port and Maritime Regiment who serve with Largs, but in Anse-à-Veau the bay was too shallow for the Mexeflote to get to the shoreline. Plan B. A human chain.

"It was fantastic to see everyone working together. The interaction between the ship's company and the villagers was completely natural and spontaneous," said Largs Bay's CO Capt Ian Johnson RFA.

"For many, this was the first opportunity for them to get off the ship in six weeks and they were doing what they left the UK to do.

"I have never seen a group



of sailors or soldiers, happier doing hard graft than I witnessed here. Oblivious to the heat, dust, sea water and sheer amount of boxes to shift they just got on with it.

"Officers and ratings alike they just got stuck in, got dirty and felt proud to be doing their bit for the people of Haiti and particularly the community of Anse-à-Veau.

"This is why we came to Haiti."

The ship and her aid were welcomed by the village priest, Father David Fontaine.

"This food has come at a vital time as we have almost run out," he told the sailors and soldiers.

"We have a very poor community that has grown significantly since the earthquake as families have fled Port-au-Prince to join their relatives. The community has almost doubled in size since the disaster and the strain on the poor has been the greatest.

"The villagers are very proud and refuse to ask for food but through the church we will store and organise the distribution starting with those that need it most."

World Food Programme

project manager Jonathan Thompson added: "It is fantastic to see the community coming together to help unload these vital stores.

"Largs Bay is just perfect for our needs and is the only credible way of distributing significant tonnage of aid to this remote area. I think that the locals have been blown away by the arrival of the ship and this will be talked about for years to come."

Largs sailed initially with donations from the British government and UK charities who responded to the January 12 quake.

As Largs made her way across 4,283 miles of ocean from Marchwood to Port-au-Prince, personnel aboard vowed to raise money for the earthquake victims by trying to row the distance.

Taking it in turns to use the rowing machines in Largs' spacious gym, the sailors, soldiers and Royal Marines aboard managed to beat their ship (top speed 18kts) into Haiti.

Their efforts raised £10,000 in pledges and donations; if you fancy adding to the total, visit www.justgiving.com/LargsBayracetoHaiti. The money will go to the



The Royal Navy & Royal Marines
Children's Fund

Registered Charity No. 1075015

PATRON: HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN

The RN & RM Children's is a National Charity based in Portsmouth. We care for children of men and women who have served or are serving in the Royal Navy and Royal Marines.

Originally set up as an orphanage, we now assist children with a wide range of needs and at times of family crisis.

Applications can be made at any time. Those seeking assistance can contact the office direct for an application form:-

Monique Bateman
or Laurene Smith
RN & RM Children's Fund
311 Twyford Avenue
Portsmouth
PO2 8RN
Telephone: 023 9263 9534
Fax: 023 9267 7574
Email: rnchildren@btconnect.com



pictures: la(phot) pete smith, frpu east



survival

Government's DEC Haiti Appeal.

Those supplies were successfully offloaded by Largs last month, since when she's been helping the UN deliver food to outlying communities.

Her loading dock and Mexeflote means she can deliver aid to communities where there is no port or where harbour facilities are limited.

First she took food to the city of Gonaïves in the north of the country, 65 miles from the Haitian capital.

Some 400,000 Haitians who live in and around Gonaïves, which has been hit by a succession of hurricanes in recent years, as well as the earthquake, will rely on food handouts for the foreseeable future.

With the only road to the city from the capital in a poor state, and the rainy season imminent, the decision was taken by the UN's World Food Programme to send one month's worth of food by ship – Largs Bay.

That food was painstakingly loaded at Varreux Beach near Port-au-Prince. Bags of rice weighing 50kg were loaded into one-ton bags by locals, then moved by troops using forklifts on to Largs' Mexeflotes for transport to the ship, where

more soldiers from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment offloaded them.

In all, 1,500 tons of rice and ready meals were transferred to the RFA, enough food to sustain 400,000 people for a month.

In Gonaïves, the process was reversed and the food put in storage for distribution to locals.

"One of the biggest problems the Haitians have is getting food out to the more outlying regions and remote villages that have had their transport networks destroyed by the quake," said 3/O Dan Tilt.

"We may only be here for a short time, but we are going to be as useful as we can and help as many people as possible."

He and his shipmates found plenty of evidence of a 'can-do' attitude: nearly every road in Port-au-Prince has been cleared of rubble... which is being used to build a new breakwater and jetty; cranes which collapsed have been removed and the port is working at a greater capacity than it was before disaster struck.

"Despite the destruction, there is hope," said LA(Phot) Pete Smith.

It's his imagery which adorns these pages. He's a man of pictures rather than words

normally, but like everyone on Largs Bay he's been moved by his experiences on Haiti.

Above all, it's the spirit of the ordinary Haitian people which has impressed the ship's company of Largs Bay to a man (and woman).

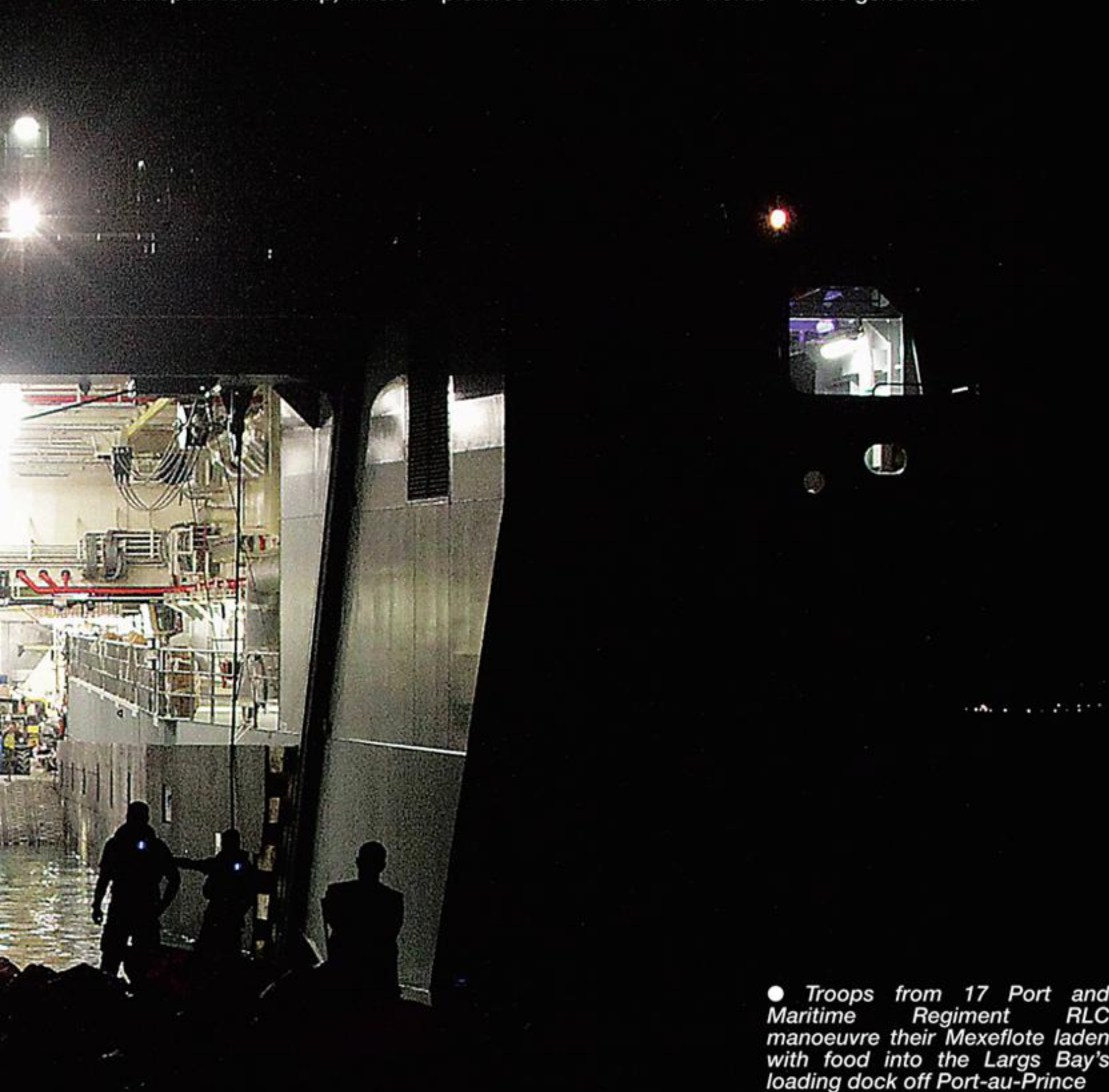
"The Haitians we've met have a smile on their faces, a cheery disposition and an eagerness to get on with the job," photographer Pete added.

"They are also eager to escape the heat and lie under their trucks in between loads – but I don't blame them for that as it's hot."

"In general, people are getting on with their lives as best they can."

Surg Lt Jim Watchorn, Largs Bay's ship's doctor, adds: "Haitians are resilient and hardy people. They are damned almost annually with some form of catastrophe or other."

"You cannot deny the deprivation of the situation and the conditions people are living in, but perhaps this is only apparent to an outsider looking in. In most cases, a simple but contented life continues regardless – and will continue to do so long after we have gone home."



● Troops from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC manoeuvre their Mexeflote laden with food into the Largs Bay's loading dock off Port-au-Prince



FIGHTING FOR THE FORCES
AND THEIR FAMILIES

HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR PENSION RIGHTS?

Test yourself with the Forces Pension Society quiz and see how you score.

Question 1

What is the minimum number of years you must serve to be entitled to some form of pension and gratuity entitlement on:

a. AFPS05? b. AFPS75?

Answers

- A. Five years for AFPS75; two years for AFPS05 or
- B. Five years for AFPS75; five years for AFPS05 or
- C. Two years for AFPS75; two years for AFPS05

Question 2

What Death in Service benefits are payable if you die in service?

Answers

- A. 3 Times Salary for AFPS75; 3 Times Salary for AFPS05 or
- B. 3 Times Salary for AFPS75; 4 Times Salary for AFPS05 or
- C. 4 Times Salary for AFPS75; 4 Times Salary for AFPS05

Question 3

How long does an individual have to apply to transfer a Preserved Pension out of the Armed Forces Pension Scheme into another Defined Benefit pension scheme?

Answers

- A. AFPS75 12 months; AFPS05 12 months or
- B. AFPS75 6 months; AFPS05 3 months or
- C. AFPS75 12 months; AFPS05 6 months

Question 4

At what age is a Preserved Pension payable to an individual who leaves the Armed Forces today on: a. AFPS05? b. AFPS75?

Answers

- A. Age 60 for all of it on AFPS75; age 65 for all of it on AFPS05 or
- B. Age 60 for service up to and including 5th April 2006 and age 65 for service from 6th April 2006 to exit date on AFPS75; normally at age 65 but can be drawn as early as 55 with actuarial reductions on AFPS05 or
- C. Age 65 for all of it on AFPS75; age 65 for all of it on AFPS05

Question 5

Does 'dynamising' apply to the pension of an individual who leaves the Armed Forces under: a. AFPS05? b. AFPS75?

Answers

- A. It does not apply to AFPS 75 but does apply to AFPS05 or
- B. It applies to both schemes or
- C. It applies to AFPS75 by does not apply to AFPS05

For the answers to these questions and information about how we can help you, visit www.forpen.co.uk/pensionsquiz

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email: memsec@forpen.co.uk

Web: www.forpen.co.uk



Arctic..... 1942-43
 Malta Convoys..... 1942
 Atlantic..... 1944
 Normandy..... 1944
 English Channel..... 1944
 North Sea..... 1944-45

Class: Hunt-class mine countermeasures vessel
 Pennant number: M34
 Builder: Yarrow, Govan
 Launched: April 27 1983
 Commissioned: July 4 1984
 Displacement: 750 tons
 Length: 197ft (60 metres)
 Beam: 33ft (10 metres)
 Draught: 10ft (2.9 metres)
 Speed: 15kts
 Complement: 45
 Propulsion: 2 x Ruston-Paxman 9-59K Deltic diesels generating 1,900hp; 1 x Deltic 9-55B diesel generating 780hp; 1 x bow thruster
 Sensors: Sonar 2193 minehunting sonar
 Armament: Seafox mine disposal system; 1 x 30mm gun with a range of 5½ miles; 2 x Oerlikon 20mm guns; 1 x minigun

Battle Honours
 Facts and figures

Middle watch

ASSUMING duties from her sister Atherstone right about now, this is Her Majesty's Ship Middleton, knuckling down to a three-year stint in the Gulf.

The veteran minehunter joins the Royal Navy flotilla in Bahrain (comprising two Hunt and two Sandown-class mine countermeasures vessels) working with Allied navies in the region to foster closer co-operation and hone mine warfare skills.

The Gulf is probably as challenging an environment as any the Hunts have been sent to during their three decades of service under the White Ensign.

To cope with the Middle East climate, Middleton underwent a four-month revamp in her home port.

'Go faster' paint (officially called Intersleek) which prevents micro organisms building up on the hull was applied, a new air conditioning system installed (to the benefit of sailors and machinery alike), sand filters fixed over every vent, and a tip-top comms system fitted.

All those enhancements, plus a thorough work-up for the Gulf, make Middleton – in the words of her CO Lt Cdr Richard Goldstone – "a potent force and welcome addition to the 2nd Mine Counter-Measures Squadron."

Before leaving the Solent in mid-February, the ship hosted the person who launched her back in 1983: Lady Blaker, widow of Sir Peter Blaker who was a defence minister at the time of the Falklands conflict.

It's nine years since the ship's sponsor was last onboard, during which time a lot has changed on the Middleton front; perhaps the most obvious alteration is the demise of the 'yellow submarine' – the remote-

controlled mine disposal vehicle. It's gone, replaced by the much more agile Seafox system.

Aside from close ties with their patron, the ship's company are bound with the Middleton Hunt in North Yorkshire which gave the ship her name, and the town of Middleton in Greater Manchester.

They're also affiliated with the Middleton-Chadderton and Rochdale Sea Cadet units, Middleton Scouts and the North Manchester Branch of the RNA.

And the strongest bond of all is with the L74 Association – the men of the previous HMS Middleton.

Their story begins on the day after war broke out in 1939 when the Admiralty ordered a string of vessels to meet the challenges of a new global conflagration.

The result, *inter alia*, was the Hunt class of destroyers, among them HMS Middleton.

When she joined the Fleet in 1942, she was immediately thrust into the crucible of war, first in the Arctic safeguarding Russian convoys, then in the Mediterranean to sustain Malta, before returning to the Arctic on the ill-fated PQ17 convoy.

The destroyer was subsequently at the forefront of the Normandy invasion, supporting British troops going ashore on Sword Beach, before spending the rest of the war in home waters to counter the inshore U-boat campaign against the British Isles.

After a post-war refit in South Africa, she was placed in reserve and broken up over the winter of 1957-58.

picture: po[phot] brad bradbury, frpu east

HEROES OF THE ROYAL NAVY No. 72 – Cdr Geoffrey Spicer-Simson DSO



photographic memories

WEARING the ubiquitous pith helmet of the day, British sailors (plus African labourers) push one of the smallest – and most famous – British warships of the Great War through the Congolese scrub after a steam tractor breaks down.

This month's rummage through the photographic archives of the Imperial War Museum takes us to Africa in 1915-16 and one of the most unusual 'heroes' in the annals of RN history: Geoffrey Spicer-Simson.

Unusual because he really wasn't very good. Not at conventional sailing. He almost sank a submarine on exercises, drove his ship ashore testing the defences of Portsmouth Harbour and sank a liberty boat with his destroyer (for which he was court-martialled).

When war came in August 1914, he was given charge of an eclectic force protecting the harbour at Ramsgate. Nothing much happened. So little happened indeed, that Spicer-Simson decamped to a hotel ashore. And from there he watched one of his gunboats disappear beneath the waves one day in November, victim of U12.

Senior officers weren't impressed and gave him a desk job in a dingy corner of the Admiralty.

But there was another side to Geoffrey Spicer-Simson. Fairly lousy sailor that he was, the officer was rather good at surveying the wildernesses of the planet: Borneo, the Yangtze River and, for three years, the Gambia.

Perhaps that was why he was given command of the most unusual Fleet ever sent to sea.

We say 'sea' but His Majesty's Ships Mimi and Toutou – the French equivalents of 'meow' and 'woof woof' – never sailed the oceans. After trials on the Thames, the two gunboats were loaded aboard a liner and shipped to Cape Town.

Their destination, ultimately, was Lake Tanganyika – some 2,000 miles distant.

Which begs the question: why?

Well, in the spring of 1915, the Hun had the run of Africa's second largest lake. From German East Africa, which lined the eastern shores of Tanganyika, they commanded the lake courtesy of two small gunboats and a 1,500-ton steamer.

This was an affront to the pre-eminence of the Senior Service. "It is both the duty and tradition of the Royal Navy to engage the enemy wherever there is water to float a ship," proclaimed First Sea Lord Sir Henry Jackson, dispatching Spicer-Simson and his ragtag force of two dozen men.

Getting to the water, now that was a challenge.

First there was a train journey to Fungurume in the depths of the Belgian Congo. Then Mimi and Toutou were offloaded and hauled through 150 miles of scrub and mountain by oxen and steam tractors. There was the small matter of 150 bridges to build to span ravines and waterways barring the boats' path.

It took six weeks to reach the next railhead for a

shortish journey to the Lualaba River, where Mimi and Toutou finally set sail. Thus began a 250-mile odyssey through the rivers and lakes of the Belgian Congo to the city of Kabalo.

Lake Tanganyika was now within touching distance. Another 150-mile railway journey and the expeditionary force arrived at the western shores of the lake in Kalemie. The passage from Cape Town had taken nearly four months.

Even now, Spicer-Simson could not unleash his *guerre de course*. It was Christmas 1915 before Mimi and Toutou were ready for battle.

When one of the Germans' scourges of the lake, the gunboat Kingani, investigated the new British force on Boxing Day, Mimi and Toutou gave chase.

The First Battle of Lake Tanganyika was an 11-minute affair. The Germans had a better gun... but could only fire forwards. The three-pounders of the more agile British boats scored several hits, killing the captain and three shipmates and forcing the senior surviving sailor to haul down his battle ensign.

Mimi and Toutou escorted their battered prize home to port. Repaired and refitted, the *Reichskriegsflagge* replaced by the White Ensign, the Kingani entered service with the Royal Navy as the newly-promoted Cdr Spicer-Simson's flagship, HMS Fifi ('tweet-tweet').

In six weeks, the over-gunned Fifi was in action; the first round fired by her new 12lb gun brought her to a shuddering halt in the lake as she tried to engage the Germans' other gunboat, Hedwig von Wissman. When she got under way again, her superior guns (if not her superior gunnery) eventually tipped the balance. Fifi's penultimate shell holed the enemy boat, the final one wrecked her engine room. The Hedwig sank.

There was one more vessel to dispatch before the Royal Navy was master of Tanganyika, the steamer Graf von Götzen. She was too large and heavily armed for Mimi, Toutou or Fifi to engage, but the Germans obliged Spicer-Simson by scuttling the vessel as an Anglo-Belgian force closed in on her home port of Kigoma. By the end of July 1916, the lake was in Allied hands.

By then Spicer-Simson was on his way home to England. Never the most stable of characters (he had a penchant for wearing skirts in Africa...), his nerve had failed; he returned to the UK to recuperate... and receive the DSO for his service on Lake Tanganyika. The newspapers printed his stories of derring do, but the Admiralty was rather less impressed. It gave him the same desk job he'd enjoyed before heading to Africa.

■ THIS photograph (Q 67676) – and 9,999,999 others from a century of war and peace – can be viewed or purchased at www.iwmcollections.org.uk, by emailing photos@IWM.org.uk, or by phoning 0207 416 5333.

What goes down...

THE date is February 18 2010.

Make a note of it in your diary. It was otherwise an unremarkable Thursday, save for Barack Obama meeting the Dalai Lama.

But somewhere off the west coast of Scotland...

With snow-laden hills behind her (if you squint hard enough through the gloom) this is a £1bn warship disappearing beneath the waves for the very first time.

New hunter-killer boat HMS Astute made her inaugural dive in open waters in the Scottish Exercise Areas (which are basically anywhere off the west coast...), chaperoned by HMS Montrose.

Astute has submerged before – conducting a ‘trim and basin dive’ in the deep basin at the BAE yard in Barrow-in-Furness.

Deep though that basin is, it cannot accommodate a fully-submerged 7,400-ton Astute class boat.

Luckily, the waters of western Scotland are more accommodating.

So with Commander Officer Cdr Andy Coles in charge, Astute left her

home port of Faslane in mid-February for several weeks of trials.

The boat’s inaugural passage from Barrow to the Clyde last November was entirely on the surface and less than pleasant; she endured Force 8 gales for a time.

Luckily, the gods were more forgiving this time around. Two days after departing Faslane, the boat passed that major milestone by completing her first, rather gentle dive.

“The first dive went very well and the ship’s company were very professional, ensuring that the dive was planned and executed safely,” said Cdr Coles.

“The crew worked very hard in the build-up to sailing, undergoing a period of safety training to conduct some surfaced trials in preparation for the dive.

“Astute is a great submarine and I’m delighted that we’ve successfully completed this major objective.”

AB(TSM) Ricky Snowling added: “This dive was a big milestone for the Astute project and it was also an exciting demonstration of what the

boat’s capable of.”

We cannot, of course, tell you how deep she dived during these first test runs. But we can tell you that (a) it wasn’t especially deep (as faster and deeper dive trials are planned) and (b) she came back to the surface again (which, as any submariner will tell you, is the most important thing...).

The first dive was part of a package of tests lined up for the fleet submarine on her ‘contractor’s sea trials’.

As the name of the trials suggests, the boat is still officially in the hands of her builders, BAE Systems.

And so a sizeable number of BAE personnel and the submarine project team from Abbey Wood were aboard for the inaugural ‘dip’.

Meanwhile on the surface... Astute’s initial trials were observed and monitored by HMS Montrose... whose job it is to hunt and, er, kill hunter-killers (enemy ones rather than our own, of course).

During a break in the trials, a boat transfer ferried some Montrose sailors across to the submarine. Among the passengers, one Lt Julia Taylor, the frigate’s deputy logistics officer.

She was helped aboard the boat by

one Lt Scott Taylor, Astute’s casing officer... permitting a reunion for husband and wife.

Sadly, it was all too brief for the Taylors; the Astute had to continue trials... as did Montrose.

The Type 23 frigate is herself undergoing some thorough tests and trials after emerging from a multi-million-pound refit in Rosyth last autumn.

With the first dive trials a success, Astute returned briefly to Faslane before sailing back to sea to resume her lengthy test package.

Those tests cover propulsion and manoeuvring trials, before moving on to weapons systems, which will see the nuclear boat try out her Sonar 2076 suite and eventually fire some of her weaponry.

This time she was accompanied by HMS Dauntless, undergoing a demanding work-up of her own in the Firth of Clyde.

It’s the second time in a month the Type 45’s been in company with £1bn of naval hardware; earlier this year, she sailed with her sister Daring for exercises off the South Coast.

■ MEANWHILE in Barrow, Astute’s younger sister played host to the person who will keep a keener eye than most on the progress of HMS Ambush throughout her career.

Lady Soar, the wife of Commander-in-Chief Fleet (and former submariner) Admiral Sir Trevor Soar, will formally launch Ambush when the boat emerges from the huge Devonshire Dock Hall at BAE’s Barrow yard later this year.

Ambush is still surrounded by scaffolding at present, so Commanding Officer Cdr Peter Green and BAE managing director John Hudson gave Lady Soar a run-down on the progress made on her boat, before taking her on a two-hour tour.

After that there was the chance to sit down and chat with the deeps who will one day take Ambush to sea.

“I have always found that it’s the people who bring a ship or submarine alive,” said Lady Soar. “I thoroughly enjoyed meeting the many personalities who are clearly working so hard and with such enthusiasm to make Ambush a success.”



... must come up

● A Harrier GR9 launches from HMS Ark Royal

Pictures: LA(Phot) Gregg Macready except where stated



Just like

HARRIERS on board HMS Ark Royal. Just like old times...

Very old times, as it happens, because by our estimation it is several years since Ark has had the role of Naval Harrier carrier – more recently she has been (ably) fulfilling the role of commando assault ship.

But after last year's £12m mini refit in Portsmouth, she is back on familiar territory.

And it has been a while since these Harriers have tasted the tang of sea breezes.

After five years in the dust and sands of Afghanistan providing close air support to coalition troops, the Harrier GR9A aircraft of Naval Strike Wing (NSW) are once again back at sea, experiencing the joys of high-tempo carrier-borne operations.

"This is what we are all about," said the Commanding Officer Naval Strike Wing, Cdr Dave 'Tinsel' Lindsay.

Paramount in the exercise was the integration of ship and air wing into one team.

And after only a few days on board, NSW were flying day and night missions to prove the achievement of maximum readiness.

"Being back at sea is great," said pilot Lt Nick Mattock.

"Ark Royal has really welcomed us and we all feel part of the ship's company."

The unique capabilities of the Harriers have been put to use in a variety of missions, including air-to-air combat, close air support precision strike sorties on land, reconnaissance flights and live weapon runs.

Cdr Lindsay said: "Naval Strike Wing's underlying philosophy is that you train like you fight, and this is perfectly in keeping with Ark's motto 'zeal does not rest'."

"I am very pleased to see just

how far we have all come in such a short time.

"It is largely down to the amount of effort that the Ark has put into preparing for our embarkation."

Aided by the latest technology from the ship's intelligence teams, the iconic Harriers have settled into their familiar maritime role with relative ease.

"We are here to provide the punch and deliver the knock-out blow," said Cdr Lindsay.

"The Harrier is proving that it is just as capable of providing that from the sea as it did in Afghanistan."

"All of us in the Strike Wing are pleased – and very excited – to be part of Ark Royal's team."

"We have had a typically warm welcome and look forward to the coming weeks and the opportunity to develop carrier strike in partnership with one of the most famous ships in the world."

But the warship's rendezvous with the Harriers was not the only show in town.

Also on board Ark in the North Sea for 'safe to operate' training were Merlins from the Flying Tigers of 814 NAS and Lynx of 815 NAS.

And just to make sure everyone was on their toes, elements of Illustrious' ship's company (their carrier is in refit on Rosyth) were sharing their expertise with their Ark colleagues, while teams from Flag Officer Sea Training and Fleet HQ were observing and assessing the carrier's performance.

The ship carried out taxing evolutions, such as a replenishment at sea in the Moray Firth area with RFA Wave Knight while simultaneously launching Harriers and operating Merlin helicopters.

"Although our basic training has been well supported by a host of squadrons operating from shore



● Another view of Ark RASing with RFA Wave Knight while carrying out flying operations

Picture: LA(Phot) Luis Holden

● Harriers over Ark Royal



● A Harrier streaks skywards from the carrier's ski-jump ramp

● Air engineers watch as a Harrier lands



● Ark Royal replenishes from fast Fleet tanker RFA Wave Knight while launching Harrier aircraft and flying Merlins
Picture: LA(Phot) Luis Holden



old times...

bases, it's fantastic to see the Naval Strike Wing, 814 and 815 Naval Air Squadrons embarked with us now to finish the final phases of our operational sea training," said Cdr Al 'Rocky' Salmon, Ark's Commander Air.

One particular area of expertise which needed to be revisited by the Strike Wing Harriers was maritime night-flying – the first time the Naval element of the Joint Force Harrier has been able to practise such skills in two years.

The jet pilots flew enough sorties at dusk and after dark in order to reacquire themselves with the particularly challenging task of launching and recovering their aircraft using the relatively cramped floating airfield provided by the Invincible-class ships.

The training programme involved six flights, working up from barely dusk to full night-time flying.

Once in the air the pilots then simulated attacks on a wide variety of targets, providing extra training for the fighter controllers in the carrier's operations room.

The most difficult part of such exercises is undoubtedly getting the aircraft back on to the deck.

Landing a jet on a moving landing strip, at night, without the use of night-vision goggles takes an immense level of skill and concentration.

Six GR9s, the most advanced variant of the bomber version of the Harrier, from the Cottesmore-based Strike Wing were being used for the training.

Their crew are an eclectic bunch; aside from Fleet Air Arm pilots, there's one Royal Marine, a US Marine Corps major and the senior pilot is an RAF squadron leader.

With over 1,000 hours flying a variety of fixed-wing aircraft, Lt Cdr Paul Tremelling, a senior pilot from Naval Strike Wing, said: "Night flying from a ship is pretty much the pinnacle of military aviation."

"Landing a single-seated, fixed-wing aircraft on the deck of an aircraft carrier, at night, is the most difficult thing you can do as a pilot."

The night flying sorties are

an essential part of Ark's ability to operate in the role of strike carrier.

Having already been embarked for two weeks as *Navy News* went to press, NSW were planning to qualify at least two more pilots for night flying over the subsequent week's training serials.

Once 'safe to operate' is done Ark plunges straight into the latest Joint Warrior exercise off Scotland.

Ark's CO, Capt John Clink said: "Whilst most of the attention in achieving this important milestone focuses on the skill of the pilot, there is no doubt that it takes teamwork and professionalism from all, and I am very proud of what has been achieved."

Ark is now scheduled to lead the RN's key deployment of the year, Auriga, to the USA later this spring, taking the NSW with her.

The skills being practised and gained in Ark today will help ensure a smooth transition to the UK's future aircraft carriers, HMS Queen Elizabeth and HMS Prince of Wales.

● Harriers line up for launch
Picture: LA(Phot) Luis Holden



● An aircrewman checks a Merlin from 814 NAS before taking off



● A Harrier launches from the rain-soaked flight deck

Picture: PO(Phot) Jonathan Hamlet



Beast of Boscombe Down

THERE'S been a strange mysterious beast occasionally spotted among the hills of Wiltshire in recent months.

Long suspected to be a refugee from foreign parts, last month the government revealed that this scarcely-seen visitor was, in fact, a creature brought to our shores by the MOD.

Two decades ago, these helicopters were the subject of British Intelligence.

Now it is British aircrew – and predominantly Naval at that – flying these former Eastern Bloc aircraft above the green plains of Wiltshire, teaching members of the Afghan military.

The Mi-17 is a beast of a helicopter to the uneducated eye. But the British pilots have relished flying them and the chance to teach the keen Afghan students.

"There is real passion. They

really want to achieve something here. They are dedicated," said Lt Bridget Compain, an experienced Commando Helicopter Force Sea King pilot, but now part of the Special Duties Squadron.

She continued: "It's rewarding to see them coming through from nothing."

"They work really hard. You can question them mercilessly and you know they'll come up with the goods," added Lt Cdr Tim Hayden.

The Afghan aircrew themselves are focused on one thing – bringing stability to their country. This is no political posture. These are brave young men, who are thinking all the time of their families at home.

Two Afghan pilots spoke to the audience: "We want to bring peace to our country. That's why we work hard here."

"I wanted my government to give me this job. I want to bring peace."

The Afghans are frank about the success of the Joint Helicopter Command's Project Curium: "We came here as nothing. We are finishing as pilots."

The two men spoke with respect of the high standards that they had been taught, and how they were looking forward to taking back to Afghanistan the knowledge and experience they had gained.

It's been a long process for these Afghan officers pulled far from home. The training programme typically took some 12 months, and was based on the experiences of the Defence Helicopter Flying School at RAF Shawbury.

An introduction to rotary-wing flying with the Gazelle was followed by a second period flying the Mi-17 – the Russian-designed helicopter that these men will be flying in Afghanistan itself.

In fact these men will possibly be flying these actual Mi-17s – as March ends so does the British commitment to this flying training, and the two Mi-17s will be transported to Afghanistan to join the nascent Flying corps there.

It is defence research firm QinetiQ that has had the tricky task of ensuring that the former Bulgarian Air Force helicopters were carefully transported, upgraded, and registered with the British military for use.

The first graduates from the Joint Helicopter Command programme returned to Afghanistan in September. Of the 27 men who have been through the system, only one did not achieve his goal of qualifying.

Wg Cdr Al Smith is the officer in charge of the Special Duties Squadron, and his executive officer is Lt Cdr Neil Davidson.

The RAF officer said: "The aircraft is in a very similar configuration to those in use in Afghanistan."

"Our first batch of trainees are already flying the Mi-17 in Afghanistan."

He added: "The plan was to train 27 aircrew and we've met that requirement."

"It is difficult to train their aircrews in theatre in the hostile environment. It's better quality training here in a benign environment."

Four of the five instructors on the Mi-17 are from the Naval service; three RN and one RM.

Lt Cdr Davidson said: "It's a nice aircraft to fly. It has its own peculiarities, but so does any aircraft."

"And teaching the Afghan students to fly is great. We teach in English, so they've had to learn English. But they've done very well. And we've adapted our situational style to teach them."

He stressed that the students were keen to learn and very receptive.

The Afghans were made up of a combination of experienced helicopter pilots, and those who were totally new to flying – "They need the old and bold, and they need the young guys to come through."

"I've loved my time on the project. I've been here for 18 months, then back to Yeovilton to CHF."

The Naval officer found his CHF background useful: "It helps because we can relate special techniques in our teaching for how to fly in Afghanistan."

"So for example we can tell them that if we were coming in to a dust environment, you would have overlanded here."

Lt Cdr Hayden commented: "All the training here has an operational slant. We explain this is why we're teaching this, this is how it will apply in Afghanistan."

As to the tasking that might fall to the Afghans, this falls outside

the British remit; Lt Cdr Davidson again: "We can teach them what they might end up doing. It's really up to the Afghan government from here."

"In RN terms, they are coming towards the end of a Naval pilot's training, and ready to go to a front-line unit where they would be considered *ab initio*."

All the Naval personnel admit to being sad now the project is coming to an end.

They've enjoyed the challenge of getting to grips with this very different helicopter – Lt Cdr Hayden: "It's quite strange compared to anything I've flown before."

"There's a different concept in the way it operates. The flight engineer is more involved."

Royal Marine Sgt Lee James is one of the two Flight Engineering Training Officers. His background is the Sea Kings of CHF, but he praises the Russian helicopters: "They're fantastic. Very efficient, and very reliable. It is different to what we're used to."

"So it's been challenging, but personally very rewarding."

"We were a fortunate group to come here to do this. Because of what I've gained personally as an instructor, and the end goal of peace – to that we're committed."

Lt Compain added: "Now coming to the end of the course, when you fly with the Afghans they've achieved so much."

"They are professional aviators."



● The Russian-designed Mi-17 that has been flying from Boscombe Down



● Sgt Lee James RM, Lt Cdr Tim Hayden, Lt Cdr Neil Davidson, and Lt Bridget Compain of the Special Duties Squadron

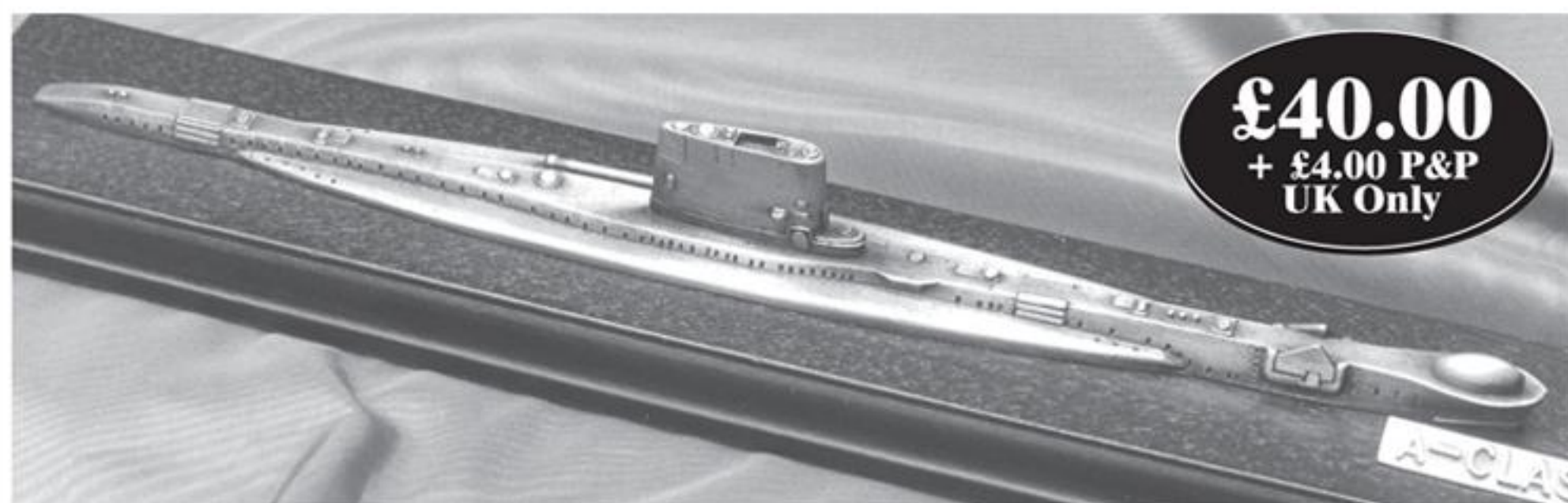


● Lt Bridget Compain in the cockpit of the Mi-17

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● Instructors from the Special Duties Squadron

Pictures: Andrew Linnett, DE&S



● Albert McKenzie VC

Statue to honour London war hero

A FUND is to be launched this month to pay for a statue in honour of an heroic London sailor.

The group behind the appeal, led by fund chairman Paul Keefe, want to see an appropriate monument to Albert McKenzie, who was seriously wounded in the Zeebrugge Raid of 1918 while manning a machine gun on the Mole under heavy enemy fire.

Albert, who sailed on the raid in the cruiser HMS Vindictive, was awarded the Victoria Cross and was recovering well from his injuries when he was struck down by Spanish flu.

Still weak from his injuries and blood poisoning, Albert – the first London sailor to win the VC – died a week before the Armistice.

Paul Keefe said: "The Albert McKenzie VC Fund has announced that the launch date for their appeal will be on April 23 – St George's Day, the same date on which the Zeebrugge raid took place in 1918.

"It has been decided to place a statue in Bermondsey and planning permission is being sought."

Paul added: "A lot of hard work has been done to get this far, but the real hard work is about to begin."

"Hopefully all will become clear in April at our launch and the people of Southwark and Bermondsey will see what we have planned, like it, and put their support behind it."



● From left: Cpl Zara Jones (RAF St Athan), Lord Mayor of Cardiff Cllr Brian Griffiths, Coy Sgt Maj Carl Taylor (3 Coy Welsh Guards) and RN veteran Tony Morgan launch Armed Forces Day 2010 in Cardiff

Picture: (PO)Phot Mez Merrill

Forces Day is launched

ARMED Forces Day 2010 has been launched in Cardiff with a homecoming parade by a battle-hardened local regiment.

Around 250 soldiers from the 1st Bttn Welsh Guards, who saw some of the fiercest fighting in Afghanistan last summer, helped launch the event; the national celebration will take place in the Welsh capital on Saturday June 26, while regional events will be held around the country close to that date.

Armed Forces Day is an opportunity for the nation to show its support for the men and women who make up the Armed

THE Royal Navy's top personnel officer has spoken of his pride at the steps taken by the Service to strengthen the ethos of equality and diversity.

Second Sea Lord Vice Admiral Sir Alan Massey spoke of the Navy's progress during a keynote speech at the Stonewall annual workplace conference in London.

Stonewall is a lobbying group which campaigns to ensure the rights and needs of lesbians, gay men and bisexuals are addressed in the wider community.

This was the seventh such conference, and this year's theme was Moving Beyond Policy.

During his speech to the 450-strong audience, the Admiral acknowledged the tremendous demands made on military personnel today call for some quite extraordinary qualities and skills.

In order to deliver this, he said, the Navy needs to ensure that its people get the tools to allow them to be their best, to be themselves and to ensure that they feel fully supported by the organisation to which they have made a personal commitment not asked of those in most walks of life.

There must be the full trust and respect between colleagues to ensure that people operate effectively in often difficult and dangerous circumstances.

In an honest reflection of the progress that has been made since the change in legalisation in 2000, the Admiral accepted that "changing behaviours takes time; changing attitudes and culture takes longer."

"It is very easy to make progress from a standing start, but what I am particularly proud of is that we have continued this progress and I feel we are gaining pace."

The Naval Service has continued to develop its strong relationship with Stonewall, from being the first of the military to join the Diversity Champions programme in 2005.

The Admiral said one of the areas

which has been improved greatly is that the Naval Service now has an active LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) Forum and support network (contact nsigbt@tiscali.co.uk).

Talking of London Pride, he said that he continues "to be heartened by the fact that such a significant number of Naval Service LGBT personnel are so keen to march in uniform in the main parade and share in the celebration."

"Firstly, because they wish to demonstrate that they are proud to be wearing their uniform as members of their Armed Service, but secondly because they are keen to give a strong personal signal that the Naval Service is an inclusive employer of choice that welcomes and actively champions diversity in its workforce."

He also told the audience that "the Equality and Diversity Team has been increased in the Navy Command HQ to improve development and implementation of any matters in relation to gender, gender reassignment, race and ethnicity and religion or belief but also sexual orientation."

"This team is charged with challenging the Navy from within and performs an essential role."

2SL concluded by saying that he felt "that as long as all Service personnel are given the tools, the best way to turn policies into practice is through strong leadership at all levels – leaders who have and understand straightforward professional and moral responsibilities."

"All leaders and managers, at all levels, must promote positive attitudes and behaviours and take action when they encounter those whose attitude and behaviours are inappropriate."

"The Naval Service is a top-class employer, looking for top-class people, and embraces diversity and equality in the workplace."

"I am proud of our commitment to inclusiveness and I personally will continue to champion it."

Chatham museum opens soon

PAINTINGS and treasures from Britain's national maritime collections will go on show this summer when the Historic Dockyard at Chatham opens a major museum and cultural venue.

No 1 Smithery is a £13m project undertaken by the National Maritime Museum at Greenwich, the Imperial War Museum and Chatham Historic Dockyard Trust.

Exhibits to be displayed in the new facility's permanent galleries

include rare ship models, works of art and other items of interest selected from more than 4,000 pieces held in storage.

Visitors will be able to see the intricate 18th century model of Admiral Balchen's flagship HMS Victory, a ship lost at sea in one of history's most spectacular shipwrecks, and a superb scale model of the Eddystone Lighthouse of 1759 – the world's first offshore lighthouse whose designer, John Smeaton, is hailed as the father of civil engineering.

Intricate bone carvings made by Napoleonic prisoners of war, and 'the King's Dockyard', a model of Chatham Dockyard made by two Sheerness craftsmen in the 1740s, will also feature.

This Maritime Treasures collection sits at the heart of the new development in the restored 19th century smithery, which once housed huge steam hammers, forges and anchor pits for the Royal Dockyard.

No 1 Smithery is due to open in July.

Must-see presentation

THE Imperial War Museum North is putting on an exhibition which may prove to be difficult to see.

Not because it is out-of-the-way (the museum, on Trafford Wharf Road in Manchester, is eminently reachable) or that there are queues morning, noon and night (though the award-winning free museum is very popular).

It's because the small interactive exhibition looks at camouflage since it was first used nearly 100 years ago.

Dazzle-painted battleships, a pink jeep and patterned fabrics all feature, with hands-on exhibits adding to the mix.

Everything from concealment, the most common form of camouflage, to disguise and deception are all explained, as well as how these techniques have been adapted from the natural world.

Camouflage runs until September 12, and the museum – served by the Harbour City Metrolink stop – is open seven days a week from 10am to 6pm.

Details at www.iwm.org.uk

Jervis Bay plea over exhibition...

CHATHAM Historic Dockyard is seeking surviving crew members and relatives of those who served in the fabled World War 2 Armed Merchant Cruiser HMS Jervis Bay.

The Trust wants to find anyone who has a connection to the ship, which was sacrificed to save others.

A large scale model of the ship will feature in the new No 1 Smithery museum in the historic dockyard (see below left), and her story, from passenger liner to heroic warship, will be told in sound and video.

In November 1940 the converted liner took the full force of a German attack to save the supply convoy she was escorting from Canada to the UK.

Her crew and CO, Capt Edward Fogarty Fegen, knew the lightly-armed Jervis Bay was no match for the German heavy cruiser Admiral Scheer, but it bravely drew the German ship's fire, allowing all but five merchantmen of the 37-strong convoy to escape.

The Jervis Bay was pounded and sunk, killing almost 200 men including her captain, although more than 60 survived and were picked up by a neutral ship.

Capt Fegen was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross for "challenging hopeless odds and giving his life to save those it was his duty to protect."

Email your contact details, and a brief summary of your story, to jervisbay@chdt.org.uk

... and also for Alliance

MEMORIES of Britain's only surviving wartime-era submarine are being sought as part of a £5m revamp for HMS Alliance.

After nearly three decades out of the water on display to the public, the boat is lined up for a major overhaul to prevent further erosion and corrosion caused by the elements (and pigeons who've taken to nesting in Alliance's nooks and crannies).

As part of that revamp for the boat, there will be innovative ways of telling the Alliance story using video and sound testimonies of former crew to convey life aboard to the 50,000-plus visitors she receives annually.

Museum staff want to record the testimonies of former crew – officers or ratings – and they're interested not just in operational missions, but also everyday life, food, sleep, downtime, and how families coped with their loved ones being away on patrols.

Details about the 'Alliance personal testimony project' are available from archivist George Malcolmson (023 9251 0354 x226) or photographic curator Debbie Corner (x234) or by emailing archives@rnsbmus.co.uk

BRITISH LIMBLESS EX-SERVICE MEN'S ASSOCIATION

BLESMA supports all those ex-Service men and women who have lost limbs, the use of their limbs, or one or both eyes. At the outbreak of World War II and all conflicts since, many Members of BLESMA went to War young and whole. They came home disabled for life. The Association offers them the fellowship of shared experience, the welfare support they need and have fought for their interests over all the long years. Whilst we do not wish to receive new Members, due to the present situation and conflict in Afghanistan and as service life takes its inevitable toll, it is unavoidable that we shall do so. It is very important therefore that we are here to assist them in their recovery and rehabilitation from their injuries.

We receive no Government Grants and rely wholly on the generosity of the public.

Please consider making a donation now or a legacy in the future, however small, to:

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E: headquarters@blesma.org

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A FORCE FOR GOOD



Dogged devotion

FORMER Field Gunner Ges Laker has returned safe and well from his one-man and two-dog mission to walk around the entire coastline of mainland Britain to raise money for St Dunstan's.

Ges, 54, used to be a PTI – just as well, as he had over 7,000 miles to cover in his anti-clockwise route around the coastline.

Ges set off in January 2009 from his home town of Warsash, in Hampshire, with his two black Labradors, a mother and son team called Phoebe and Sumo (pictured above by LA(Phot) Dan Hooper).

During the Cornwall leg towards the end, Ges was joined by former Fleet Air Arm colleagues in the Helston area, who offered to walk with him, or supplied warm beds and food.

He and his four-legged friends walked on average 20 miles a day, sleeping in a tent in often sub-zero temperatures. They returned to a hero's welcome in March having raised £18,000 for St Dunstan's.

"I have wanted to do the walk for about 15 years now and I felt that if I'd left it any longer I'd be too old," said Ges. He added: "My two Labradors were great company."

Also raising money for St Dunstan's is former pilot Mike Scholes, who hopes to set an unusual world record.

Mike was an RN pilot before

setting up his own successful, Sussex-based hot-air balloon business, Chad Ballooning, during which he set five British ballooning records.

In November 2007 he had to stop flying solo as he suddenly lost most of his sight. This didn't stop Mike taking on new challenges with the support of St Dunstan's, who helped him adjust to losing his sight.

"They've been amazing," said Mike. "I never thought I would be able to go skiing again but I've been skiing, kayaking and canoeing thanks to the confidence building training and support of St Dunstan's. Now I would like people to know more about the terrific service they offer."

His latest idea is to trek to the North Pole in aid of the charity and, once there, fly a small hot air balloon flight, thus setting an (unofficial) world record as the most northerly hot air balloon flight piloted by a registered blind person.

The trek will be led by fellow balloonist David Hempleman-Adams. They will start at the Russian camp at Barneo, about 89° north, pulling sledges with all their equipment over the last degree of latitude to the geographic North Pole, a distance of about 60 miles.

Mike's webpage is www.northpole2010.org

Freezin' for a reason

SOME ideas are bad, some ideas are good, some, like plunging into an icy cold sea wearing only a bow-tie and shorts, are just plain odd.

It sounds like a typically eccentric Brit thing to do – but in fact it happened on the other side of the pond, as Lt Cdr John Aitken told us.

John, an exchange officer at COMSUBDEVCON in Groton, Connecticut, joined a local rugby team in the New England league and it wasn't long before they had talked him into a spot of fund-raising.

"Agreeing to take part in something called a 'Penguin Plunge' might be regarded as one of my bad ideas, but in fact it was great fun," he said.

"Several of these 'penguin plunges' are organised in the more bracing climate areas of the US by the national Special Olympics charity under the slogan 'Freezin' for a Reason.'

"The aim is for as many hardy souls as possible to head into the water to raise money."

Thus it was that John found himself, clad only in a white bow-tie, an RN teeshirt and a pair of swimming shorts, on the beach in New London facing a grey and less-than-welcoming Long Island Sound.

He recalls: "Even I, as a son of Newcastle, born on the banks of the Tyne, thought it was a bit nippy."

"The teeshirt aroused the



● We are assured that water is very, very cold... Lt Cdr John Aitken stands second from right

curiosity of several of the locals and I was quick to confirm that yes, I was indeed a Brit, no, we weren't invading and yes, the water did look a bit chilly."

At the appointed hour, John joined about 300 other 'penguins' in various forms of dress as they took up their positions at the start line, watched by local NBC and Fox TV news crews. Then he took the plunge.

He said: "Someone shouted 'GO!' and bellowing 'God Save

the Queen!' I launched myself into the oggin where the sea water temperature was 35°F, something I had tried not to think about."

He added: "Exhilarating is probably the best word for it. I felt as though there were needles in my feet, a metal band around my head and some uninvited and unwelcome assailant had their freezing cold hands in my shorts."

"I swam out, perhaps 15 metres,

before thinking 'I'm going to die!' and heading back to the safety of shore, a towel, a hip flask and a big bag of thermal clothing."

"It took about ten minutes of vigorous massage to encourage the blood back into my feet."

The plunge raised about \$65,000, of which more than \$2,500 was raised by John's rugby team.

The experience hasn't put him off, in fact he plans to repeat the whole thing again next winter...

Concerted fundraising

ROYAL MARINE Band concerts in Stonehouse Barracks have raised £6,000 for Plymouth charities.

The concerts are organised by Carole Dinham, PA to the Commanding Officer, and have been very popular with the general public.

All proceeds from ticket sales go to charity and the latest beneficiaries are the RM Charitable Trust Fund; RM Volunteer Cadet Force; Alexandra House; Horizons; Plymouth Shopmobility and Community Transport; Precious Lives Appeal; and the Elizabeth Svendsen Trust.

Carole said: "I am so pleased that the Royal Marines can show their support to the local community in this small way."

"I would like to thank those who continue to attend concerts for their support but especially I would like to thank the band for their excellent performances which make the concerts such a success."

■ AND there will be a Royal Marines Band charity concert in Chichester this month, raising money for Seafarers UK and the Royal Marines Charitable Trust.

The band will be performing at St Paul's Church in Chichester on Saturday April 17 with two concerts at 2.30pm and 7.30pm.

Tickets cost £15 each, and can be obtained from Cdr Martin Ewence on 023 9262 5290 or from Seafarers UK on 023 9273 6101.

Cakes baked

SAILORS and Marines from the Commando Helicopter Force benefitted from a festive gift from a local baker of 29 Christmas cakes and a donation of £1,000 from the people of Wincanton and the surrounding district.

Local baker Declan Farrell and his son gave the fruitcakes to CHF saying: "It is a great honour for my family to show our support to the Service men and women who are serving our country with such distinction."

The money was collected by the Wincanton branch of the Support our Troops organisation.



Ark lark

TAKING on a 22,000-tonne warship with a top speed of over 30 knots in a race was never going to be easy – but 20 officer cadets from Vanguard Division gave it their all during their Initial Fleet Time.

As HMS Ark Royal set off from Glenmallan to travel around to Newcastle, a distance of 198 miles as the crow flies, Vanguard Division (pictured above by LA(Phot) Gregg Macready) set off to race the ship on their treadmills, covering an equal distance overnight.

Running on three treadmills, all the cadets took part in the race, assisted by their Divisional Officer, Lt Tim Blatchford, and Divisional Senior Rate CPOET(WE) Mike Nolan, who each covered nine miles.

The event was organised and conceived by Officer Cadet Tim Bateson, from Fareham, who said: "We wanted to raise some money for the RNRMC and this appeared to be an appropriate challenge to prove that we are 'Fit to Fight, Fit for Life.'"

He added: "It is heartwarming to receive so much support from the ship's company, who are inundated with requests for charity."

"Special thanks are due to the members of the Mess below the treadmills, whose charitable tendencies were stretched to breaking point by the constant pounding of feet above their heads!"

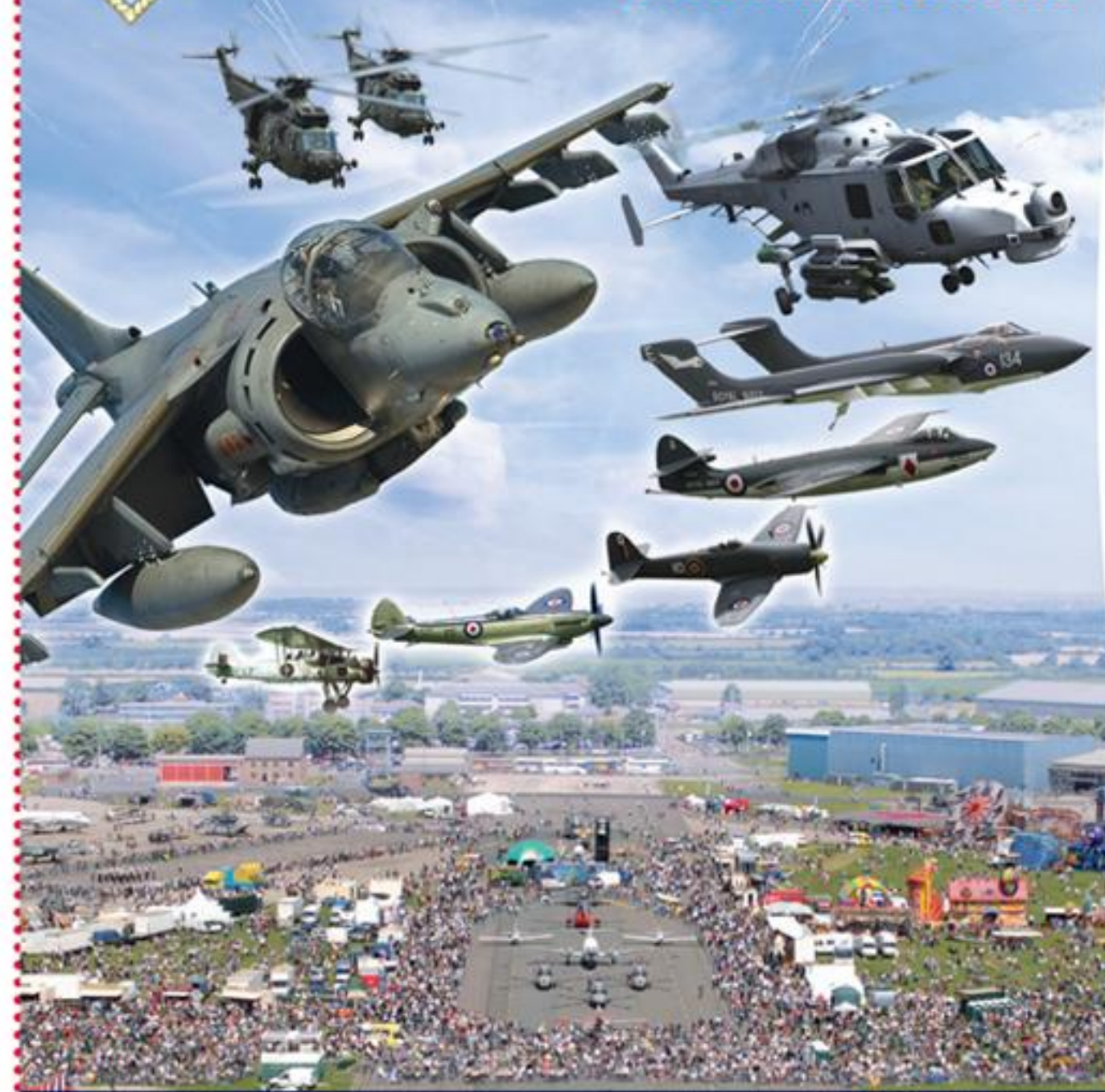
The final mileage total was 205 and the cadets were rewarded for their exertions by raising more than £500.

FIVE PAIRS OF TICKETS TO BE WON!!!

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SATURDAY 10 JULY 2010

CELEBRATING RNAS YEOVILTON'S 70TH ANNIVERSARY



RNAS Yeovilton will be celebrating its 70th Anniversary in 2010 and the International Air Day on Saturday 10th July offers a justifiable opportunity to look back on the 70 glorious years since RNAS Yeovilton was commissioned as HMS HERON.

An extensive flying and static display will take place with historic aircraft such as the Swordfish, Seafire, Sea Fury, Sea Hawk and Sea Vixen. Air Day will also feature the RAF Red Arrows and Spanish Air Force Patrulla Aguila.

Enter our competition and you could be one of five lucky winners of a pair of adult tickets to this internationally famous event. Simply answer the question below, complete the entry form and post to: Yeovilton Air Day Competition, Navy News, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, Hants. PO1 3HH or email your answer and details to: bm@navynews.co.uk

Closing date: 4th June 2010

Question: What Anniversary is RNAS Yeovilton celebrating this year?

Answer

Name

Address

Post Code

Phone

Email

Entries must reach the Navy News office by 12 noon 4th June 2010. Five entries will be drawn at 15.00. Each lucky winner will be notified by email, phone or post and will receive a pair of adult tickets by post direct from the Air Day office. The decision of the judges is final and there is no alternative prize. Employees of Navy News are not permitted to enter the competition.

TICKET HOTLINE: 08445 781 781

Tickets also available from our website www.yeoviltonairday.co.uk

RNRMC round-up

THE Royal Navy Royal Marines Charity has recently paid out £150,000, including the following grants:

- £50,000 to the RNBT.
- £25,000 to the RN and RM Children's Fund.
- £25,000 to Combat Stress for its Community Welfare project.
- £30,000 to the St Dunstan's Centre at Llandudno.

The latter two are charities who have naval beneficiaries who have not been supported before by the RNRMC.

In addition the first grant was made to the Families Activities Breaks to fund ten places for the widows and children of naval service families.

RNRMC chief executive Robert Robson, said: "Increasing both the amount we can give and the breadth of charities that we support is a core part of why the RNRMC exists."

"Being able to give supplementary grants to the RNBT and Children's Fund on top of the grants made last November and also to help new causes is great."

In addition the Naval Service Amenity Fund, another RNRMC subsidiary, paid out over £10,000 in the first three months in grants to help with: recommissioning and pre-deployment events for HMS Triumph; the commissioning ceremony of HMS Dauntless; a families' day for HMS Sutherland and HMS Monmouth; new kit for 'Millies' mother and toddler group at JSU Northwood; funds for 771 NAS crewroom equipment, HMS Sultan's wardroom and the WO and Sergeants Mess at CTCRM.

Robert Robson said: "Every week we get requests for money from ships and establishments to help with all sorts of events."

"We would love to give 100 per cent for everyone and, with help, we will – if you are not already doing so get signed up to SABS, raise money for the RNRMC and get involved."

"Everything we give goes to the naval service past and present, and nowhere else. Please help us help you."

RNRMC fund-raising events include:

- Sailors from HMS Bulwark on a charity run while the ship was on her way from Copenhagen to North Shields. The sailors and Marines ran the equivalent distance of the circumference of the country on three running machines.

- HMS Monmouth's 100-Mile Relay Challenge, during which 100 members of the ship's company ran a 100-mile relay on the upperdeck in the Red Sea.

- HMS Pembroke's Self Propel Around Britain – keeping fit and raising money by circumnavigating the UK on one of the ship's three training machines.

- Bike 800 – eight cyclists are planning to pedal 800 miles around England in one week, visiting Headley Court, Selly Oak hospital and Wootton Bassett among other places.

- Midnight Sun Cycle – Barrie Whitehead and Mike Acott are going to cycle unsupported from Bardufoss in Norway which is within the Arctic circle, to the Royal Naval Air Station at Yeovilton in Somerset. With a total distance of 1,400 miles, they are planning to leave Bardufoss on June 24, to be back at Yeovilton on July 11.

- Navy Climb 2010 – Sailors from HMS Raleigh are preparing to climb one of the world's highest mountains this September to raise money for the RNRMC and the Royal British Legion.

- HMS Calliope, the Royal Naval Reserve Unit located in the North East of England, has chosen the RNRMC as its adopted charity for 2010. The ship's company got the year off to a good start by raising £793 after its Burns Night supper.

To find out more about the RNRMC and SABS, go to the website at www.rnrmc.org.uk or call 023 9254 8093.

Magnum force for good

WHEN you're on a six-week deployment doing watches under the sea without a sweetshop in sight, the little treats of life become very important.

Important enough for the submariners of HMS Sceptre to set what is possibly a world record for an ice-cream at auction.

Not just any ice-cream of course, but a Magnum, the weekly treat which brightens every Sunday evening for the ship's company – well, nearly every Sunday.

Sadly on this six-week deployment stocks had run out after four weeks and the deeps bunkered down and tried to forget what they were missing – until one of the chefs found a lone Magnum hiding down the back of the freezer.

Rather than take it into a quiet corner and deal with it himself, the chef nobly broadcast his find to the ship's company.

This landed the boat with a bit of a problem. How do you divide a single Magnum among 130?

Someone had the brainwave of auctioning it for charity and the date was set. The men mustered in the Senior Rates mess with the Coxswain presiding and the bidding soon became lively.

Within seconds an opening bid of 50p became £40. Tension mounted as two dedicated ice-cream lovers were left to battle it out until the gavel fell at £100 to PO Berry.

Scoffing it in full view of a salivating ship's company, PO Berry remarked: "This is possibly the most satisfying ice-cream I have ever eaten."

The money raised will go to the Clippen's School in Scotland.

CPO Wiltshire, whose son goes to the school, said: "I can't believe he paid so much for a ice-cream. The money will go to a good cause though, and I thank him for it."



● PO Berry and a very valuable ice-cream...



Life begins at 40

WHEN Debs Oliver, a watchkeeper with the RFA, turned 40-something she had a good look at her life and decided something had to change.

"I was unfit, overweight and a smoker," said Deborah (pictured above), from Helston, in Cornwall.

"Looking through an old photo album gave me a wake-up call and I decided to do something about it."

"I gave up smoking over a year ago and have lost three stone, live a healthy lifestyle and love every minute of my career in the RFA."

Now Deborah, 48, has set herself another challenge, to complete the gruelling 'Walk across Scotland' coast-to-coast route inside two weeks, to raise money for BLESMA (British Limbless

Ex-Servicemen Association).

She will set off in May to walk from Lochailort on the west coast to St Cyrus on the east across mountainous terrain.

During her time off watch in RFA Lyme Bay, currently in the Arabian Gulf, Deborah has been training hard for her Scottish marathon, using the ship's gym to prepare herself for the unsupported 172-mile walk.

Deborah joined the RFA in 2003, following on the family tradition of joining the Services – her father was in the Army, her brothers served in the Navy and Army, and her eldest son is currently serving in the Navy.

"All these challenges I can tie in with helping others and I can't think of anything more worthy than BLESMA," she said.

Dave wave

ENGINEERING Technician David Boyle became Commanding Officer of HMS Illustrious for a day after bidding £91 in a charity auction.

Marine Engineer David was particularly keen to get the appointment, as the ship sailed past his hometown of Newcastle, enabling him to wave to his parents as she passed.

The money will go to one of the ship's nominated charities, the MacIntyre Centre, a school for autistic children, and the Promise Dreams charity, which works with severely and terminally ill children.

Marathon men and women

CHIEF Petty Officer Marcus Bohlin is set to make a titanic effort for charity over the next few weeks.

Marcus, 39, who works at HM Naval Base Clyde, ran the Great Scottish Run last year for his chosen charity, Alzheimer Scotland, and this year plans to redouble his efforts to raise cash.

Later this month (April 18) he will be taking part in the Chris Hoy Half Marathon in Edinburgh, then in May he will walk 96 miles of the West Highland Way, from Milngavie to Fort William.

As though that wasn't enough, super-fit Marcus will then return to Edinburgh on May 23 to run the full marathon – all in all a total of 135 miles over a five-week period.

Marcus aims to raise £1,650 for Alzheimer Scotland.

"My dear old grandad suffers from Alzheimer's disease," said Marcus.

"I want to raise money for this charity so that people can continue to get the help and support they deserve to make the rest of their lives as happy and as dignified as possible."

To contribute to his charity go to www.justgiving.com/marcusbohlinswhw2010

Steward Pamela McLean will be putting on her running shoes this month (April) for the London marathon.



● CPO John Barnard is cheered on by the crew of HMS Lancaster

John rows a million

WHEN CPO John Barnard left for a seven-month deployment in HMS Lancaster last year he set himself a goal – to row one million metres and raise £1,000 for charity.

Four months later he completed the feat, surpassing his target, and collecting, for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Children's Fund.

CPO Barnard, an Engineering Technician (ME), wanted to help the charity because his youngest son has Type 1 diabetes and the charity has funded an insulin pump and a blood glucose monitor, as well as helping with school fees.

These have made such a difference to his son's life that John is determined to give something back.

"Not being a particular 'fittie' I decided to go with the Million Metre Row as I had done some rowing in the past," he explained.

"The row started just before we got into Gibraltar in October and ended just before our stand-off in Dubai at the beginning of February."

"I mainly rowed in the Winch Well which is outside the ship's air conditioning boundary and during the Red Sea transit, temperatures reached a high of 45°C."

"It was hard to stay motivated sometimes, but the ship's company spurred me on to finish and has been extremely generous in sponsorship."

The Just-Giving page will remain active until the end of May when the ship returns, all donations welcome on www.justgiving.com/John-Barnard-Million-Metres-Row



LEADING Physical Trainers Sion Jenkins (he's the extra from the Bee Movie on the left) and Danny Card organised a light-hearted run inside Devonport Naval Base to raise money for Sport Relief.

All volunteer runners, military or civilian, had to appear in fancy dress and could choose whether to run one mile or three.

Sion said: "We wanted to do something for Sport Relief so myself and Danny decided to involve as many people as possible by organising the fun run. Staff paid to take part and all of the money raised was donated to the charity."

HMS Collingwood also did its bit for Sports Relief. Executive Officer Cdr Chris Lade was pulled around the establishment by Phase 2 trainees ('motivated' by the PTIs) and tots from the Forces Families Club held a one-mile walk with their mums, joined by LPT William Callen and First Lieutenant Martin Peak.

Pamela, 29, has already finished two marathons, in London in 2003 and Edinburgh in 2009. This year she will be running to raise funds for the Royal Star and Garter Homes for Disabled Ex-Servicemen and Women.

Pamela had various jobs in Worksop and Leeds before deciding she wanted to travel the world and meet new people.

She joined the Navy ten years ago and has served in HMS Leeds Castle, Ocean, Cumberland, Roebuck, and at HMS Raleigh and Collingwood.

She is currently working as a steward at RNAS Culdrose.

To support Pamela, go to www.justgiving.com/pamelamclean1

A 20-strong team of runners from 815 Naval Air Squadron in Yeovilton donned their running shoes to compete in the Bath Half Marathon, raising money for St Margaret's Hospice Somerset and Dorothy House Hospice Care.

And 26 men and women from 815 NAS took part in a 12-hour Rowathon to raise money for Macmillan Cancer Support.

A team of dedicated rowers started the challenge at 8am and rowed throughout the day, completing the event 12 hours and 118 miles later and raising over £300.

MOD seeks champions to reward

MOD Permanent Under Secretary Sir Bill Jeffrey will host the 2010 Ministry of Defence People Awards on September 24 – so if you know of anyone who fits the bill, submit a nomination.

The awards recognise, celebrate and reward a huge variety of outstanding contributions from teams and individuals – civilian and military – in advancing equality and diversity.

Search “MOD People Awards” on the Defence Intranet for further details.

If your endeavours or those of someone you know fit the bill, then give them the opportunity to reap the praise they deserve.

The process is quick and easy – nominations are welcomed until June 28.

Please send nominations to Doron Davda at DCP-CCDiversity2@mod.uk

Nick clocks up 7,000 hours aloft...

A NAVY pilot at Cudrose has clocked up 7,000 hours in the air. Lt Cdr Nick Lee, of 750 Naval Air Squadron, joined the Navy in 1983 as an aircrew officer, starting flying training in 1984.

Shuttling between bases at Cudrose, Yeovilton, Plymouth and York – where he undertook an instructing tour with the RAF – Nick accumulated his hours on numerous aircraft, including the Chipmunk, Grob, Firefly, Gazelle, Sea King (Mk 5 and 6) and both types of Naval Jetstream.

He was the first CO of 727 NAS, which recommissioned in 2001, and has been senior pilot on 771 and 750 squadrons, as well as gaining Qualified Flying Instructor and Qualified Helicopter Instructor status.

Nick will help introduce the new King Air into Naval service at 750 squadron.

To mark his aviation milestone, Nick was given a congratulatory cake by Lt Cdr Nick Armstrong, CO of 750 NAS.

... and Gordon makes 5,000

THE Officer Commanding the Lynx simulator at Yeovilton has reached the 5,000 hour mark over a long and varied Naval career.

Lt Cdr Gordon ‘Gordo’ Cook joined the Senior Service as an observer in 1985, and after completing his training in Jetstreams and Lynx he started his operational career with 829 NAS.

He has gone on to serve with 815 NAS and Naval Flying Standards Flight, including operational tours in former Yugoslavia and Kosovo.

As one of the Navy’s most experienced observers Gordo has flown from numerous carriers, destroyers and frigates, including HM ships Argonaut, Brave, Boxer, Illustrious, Gloucester, Manchester and Cardiff.

Cudrose stalwart awarded medal

A CIVILIAN worker who recently retired after 31 years of service at RNAS Cudrose has been presented with his Imperial Service Medal.

Keith Hocking, who was born at Helston, started work at Cudrose in 1978, working in various areas until his final stint in the Supply Department, from which he retired last September.

The medal, awarded at the prerogative of the Queen to eligible civil servants who have completed at least 25 years of meritorious service, was handed to Keith by the Commanding Officer of the air station, Capt Graeme Mackay.

Trust funds nurse’s research trip to US

A NAVAL officer has returned home following a four-week research visit to the United States.

Lt Matthew Wesson, a serving mental health nurse based at Portsmouth, crossed the Atlantic on a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship with the aim of seeing how the American military prevent and treat traumatic stress injuries.

Matthew’s fellowship came in the medical category, for the treatment of traumatic injuries, which opened the door for him to work in military facilities in Washington DC and San Antonio, Texas.

The officer plans to present his findings to his colleagues in the UK Defence mental health service to help advance the knowledge of how best to assist Service personnel suffering from traumatic stress as a result of military operations.

Although the American facilities were considerably larger – hardly surprising, as the US Army is around seven or eight times the size of the British Army – Matthew found that both nations are providing “high-quality, evidence-based care” to Service personnel suffering from post traumatic stress disorder, which gives them

the best chance of recovery.

However, Matthew also gained some key insights into how the UK’s military mental health services could be expanded, especially in the area of prevention.

Of equal significance is the fact that the officer fostered close working relationships with the Americans to ensure the sharing of best practice in the future.

Matthew’s fellowship was made possible by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, which supports “the advancement and propagation of education in any part of the world for the benefit of British citizens of all walks of life

in such an exclusively charitable manner that such education will make its recipients more effective in their life and work, whilst benefiting themselves and their communities, and ultimately the UK as a whole.”

Each year some 100 fellowships are awarded for a wide range of projects. Churchill Fellows can be of any age and in any occupation and every application is judged on the worth of the individual and the merit of the project.

British citizens resident in the UK are eligible for the annual awards, and applicants must demonstrate that their project is feasible and worthwhile, and of real benefit to their community and to the UK on return.

Past award winners include nurses, artists, scientists, engineers, farmers, conservationists, carers, craft workers, emergency service personnel and sportsmen and women.

For more details see www.wcmt.org.uk

Community workers are winners

TWO community workers from Plymouth who spend their spare time supporting the families of deployed Service personnel have won national awards.

Helen Howlett and Adele Towsey, who work as community development workers for the NPFS/RMW Naval Area Community Organisation, were both commended for this year’s MOD People Awards.

The pair have overseen the development of the Friends and Families of Deployed Units (FAFDU) support group since it started in 1999.

FAFDU evolved from several groups supporting ships and submarines, and its ethos – “if they’re away for more than a day, come and join us”, grew from a recognition that Service families need support beyond the time when they are deployed – training stints and postings out of port area also can cause angst.

Monthly events are arranged to allow people in similar circumstances to meet, network and use links to other agencies and organisations.

And it is not a dark blue organisation – FAFDU also covers the families of RM, RFA, Army and RAF personnel.



● Former workers from the Swan Hunter yard on the flight deck of HMS Ark Royal on Tyneside

Pride of the North East

A PARTY of shipbuilders from the North East have made a nostalgic visit to see the fruit of their labours, 25 years on.

The warship, on the Tyne for a visit to Newcastle, invited former employees of the Swan Hunter yard to take a tour and share stories of their time working on the

current Fleet Flagship back when it was commissioned in 1985.

Many of those who visited had not seen the ship since she left the slipway, and several arrived with photographs and other mementos of their time working on the Ark.

“It’s fantastic to be back again and see so many old faces,” said

Lawrence Gray, a skilled carpenter who carved the ship’s battle honours board.

“For the Ark to be home is just wonderful.

“When we were building her we worked on the understanding that this wasn’t just another job.

“We were building something special, not only a warship but a happy home for those who serve at sea.”

Similar sentiments were echoed throughout the day, with so many former Swan Hunter employees arriving to see the ship that extra tours had to be arranged.

“It’s simply astounding just how strong the bonds are that continue to exist between Ark Royal and the community that built her,” said the carrier’s Commanding Officer, Capt John Clink.

“On the 25th anniversary of her commissioning we are particularly pleased to reaffirm our close links with Tyneside.

“We never cease to be amazed by the high regard with which the people of the North East hold the Royal Navy, and the special affection they reserve for Ark Royal.”

The ship’s visit coincided with A&P Tyne, located just across the river from Swan Hunter, cutting the first batch of steel for the HMS Queen Elizabeth, the carrier that will eventually replace the Ark.



● Logs Beyonce Morgan with her family at HMS Raleigh

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Family flies in

PROUD parents come from far and wide to see their offspring on parade at the completion of a course at HMS Raleigh.

Not many come as far as the family of Logs Beyonce Morgan, who joined the Navy a year ago.

Her father, Donovan, flew in from Jamaica, while her mother, Petrona Aldridge, travelled from New York.

Beyonce (30) has just completed a 26-week Defence Chefs course (er, Logs (CS(P))...), and took part in a passing-out parade to mark the occasion.

As she last saw her family over a year ago, keeping in touch by phone and email, she was delighted

to welcome them to Cornwall.

“I was ecstatic that my parents were able to be at Raleigh to witness my passing out of professional training,” said Beyonce, from Kingston.

“Unfortunately they were not able to attend my basic training ceremonial parade.”

Beyonce did not just pass the course – she was adjudged to be best student during the training.

She now joins the catering team on board aircraft carrier Ark Royal – and hopes to see her mother again later in the year when the ship visits the United States as part of the Exercise Auriga deployment.



● Big Cig, aka MA Mike Beavis, being put through his paces by Cpl PTI Tom Nicoll on the assault course at CTCRM Lympstone

Picture: PO(Phot) Christine Wood

Butt-head is Beavis

THERE could well be one or two details of Service life that probably never crop up when you go into a careers office.

Like being asked to dress up as a cigarette butt...

MA Mike Beavis was up for the challenge, however, as the Naval Service made its annual bid to persuade sailors to stop smoking, using the iconic Big Cig to get the point across.

But Cig was not seen only on the CTCRM assault course at Lympstone – further west Big Cig (or possibly a clone...) puffed his

way round HMS Raleigh with a group of Week Nine trainees who were running round the base carrying a stretcher, one of their final exercises before passing out of the training establishment.

Bases around the country provided information and support to those interested in kicking the habit, and although the annual initiative around No Smoking Day attracts most attention, regular clinics at Raleigh and other establishments ensure the message is broadcast loud and clear throughout the year.

Submariners receive their prizes

PRIZES have been presented to officers who achieved the top marks during training at the Royal Navy Submarine School in 2008.

Lts Andy Perks, Ian Critchley and Neil Botting received their awards from Capt John Edgell, Chief of Staff and Captain Submarines Devonport Flotilla.

Lt Perks was the winner of the Submarine Officers Life Membership award in recognition of his achievements during Deputy Weapons Engineering Officer (DWEO) course.

He is now putting his training into practice as the DWEO on board HMS Trenchant.

Lt Botting, currently serving on board HMS Triumph, was presented with the Richard Howard Johnston Memorial Sword, awarded to the top student attending the Advanced Warfare Course.

Lt Critchley, who won the Lord Fieldhouse Memorial Prize for his performance during the Intermediate Warfare Course, is now submarine controller at Permanent Joint HQ Northwood.

Recruiter saluted over new software

A RECRUITER has been commended for developing new software which has been adopted as standard by the RN and RAF.

WO Norman Prior received the recognition from Flag Officer Scotland, Northern England and Northern Ireland Rear Admiral Martin Alabaster at a ceremony in Liverpool.

WO Prior, who joined the Navy in 1971, became a Naval recruiter in 2001 and has been Area Regional Manager for the past two years.

His commendation refers to his "personal sacrifice, professionalism, enthusiasm, commitment and exceptional team effort" in developing the software.

Norman's work helped deliver a training and financial management information system that has been adopted as standard operating procedure by the RN and RAF.

On receiving his commendation, Norman said: "I was thrilled to receive my commendation from Rear Admiral Alabaster and would like to thank the rest of the team who assisted me in delivering this software."

Nobby is tops

FORMER Navy stalwart Nobby Hall has been voted Person of the Year in a three-way tie for an award sponsored by the *Turks and Caicos Weekly News*.

Nobby, hailed as "a fierce guardian of the country's borders", is Assistant Commissioner in the tiny Caribbean British Overseas Territory, which has a population of less than 40,000.

Historic post for reservist

A ROYAL Marines Reservist has made his mark in the annals of Ireland after being invited to become an instructor at the Defence Forces' United Nations Training Centre.

The centre's Commanding Officer, Brig Gen Conor O'Boyle, believes that Lt Col Mark McKinney, from Portrush, is the first British Armed Forces officer to instruct at the Curragh Camp since 1922, when it was handed over by the British Army to the

Kate goes back to Raleigh

MILITARY Cross holder MA Kate Nesbitt has unveiled a framed citation detailing her bravery in Afghanistan to help the Navy's newest recruits.

The medical assistant, who completed her basic training at HMS Raleigh in 2006, was awarded her medal for outstanding bravery when she saved a soldier's life under fire.

In doing so she became the first RN Servicewoman, and only the second woman in history, to receive the award.

Kate was invited back to Raleigh to see the citation, located within one of the new entry training blocks.

She also gave a presentation on her experiences in Afghanistan to an audience of 600 recruits, and took part in a charity triathlon to raise cash for the Royal Navy and Royal Marines Charity.

"I haven't been back to HMS Raleigh since I completed my training and it's good to see all the trainees," said Kate.

"Everything was really important when I was here."

"Looking back to my time in Afghanistan, I was just following my training."

"I know everyone else would have done the same. I was just in the right place at the right time."



All change at Nelson as branch line shuts

THE train now departing HMS Nelson leaves cleaners breathing a sigh of relief...

It's "All change!" in cabin EA24 as Lt Rolf Williams, who has completed a 15-month engagement at Navy Command HQ, moves out with the results of his hobby.

That's three Inter-City and one goods train, plus their station, and an entire Alpine village with 350 pine trees and several feet of snow.

The N-gauge model train set has been a labour of love for Rolf, who has scratch-built the fictitious village of Michelsdorf in his cabin.

The 4ft by 6ft base board, which sits on the bed, dismantles into three sections that conveniently stack as a sideboard and are designed to fit onto the backseat of a car – or so Rolf hopes!

The scene is that of an Alpine German village inspired by Rolf's

childhood trips to Munich, where he sketched the trains during the mid-1970s and looked with envy at the model layouts displayed at *Deutsche Bundesbahn* mainline stations.

The rolling-stock was made by German firm Fleischmann, but the scenic materials were all bought from Gaugemaster, which claims to be the largest model railway outlet in the South – and which proved a terrible temptation to the reservist.

"The proximity of their shop called 'The Engine Shed' in Ford near Arundel presented an irresistible opportunity," said Rolf, a media operations specialist.

"I am indebted to the wardroom cleaners, who have been vacuuming up small heaps of sawdust, snow, and fake pine needles for months without complaint."

"I can only think that the novelty of seeing beer gardens, hotels and mountains emerge on my desk and migrate to the village was sufficiently intriguing."

Rolf's mother was born in Munich, and his grandfather was responsible for the German rail network during World War 2.

The model is a work in progress; two-thirds complete, and is ultimately designed to look its best at night, when the whole village and trains will light up.

Jane stretchered off

THE CO of HMS Wildfire was stretchered off during her final night at the reserve unit.

But there was no medical emergency – it was just Cdr Jane Beattie's colleagues at Northwood giving the accident and emergency nurse an appropriate send-off.

Having handed over the reins to Cdr Ant Chapman, Cdr Beattie was piped to attend to an emergency, and found herself

bandaged and on a stretcher with a 'drip' of Nelson's blood.

Cdr Beattie, also an occupational health and safety consultant, leaves HMS Wildfire to head up the RNR's Nursing branch.

Her departure to a waiting car was expedited by a group of junior ranks who had 'scrubbed up' to assist PONN Anna Hayes and PO John Morgan, who orchestrated the event.



● Surg Vice Admiral Philip Raffaelli

New man leads medics

SURGEON Vice Admiral Philip Raffaelli has taken charge of the Defence Medical Services in succession to Lt Gen Louis Lillywhite.

A Scot who graduated from Edinburgh University in 1979 via the Royal Navy's Medical Cadetship scheme, Admiral Raffaelli joined the Submarine Service and spent much of his early career in nuclear submarines.

He then held a number of shore appointments including a period in PJHQ and the post of Medical Officer in Charge of the Institute of Naval Medicine in Alverstoke.

In a letter to all those in the Defence Medical Services, Admiral Raffaelli said: "I am honoured to have been selected as your Surgeon General."

Flying visit

A SEARCH and rescue Sea King from HMS Gannet made a short flight to visit Tarbolton Primary School – pilot Lt Graham Humphries reckons the aircraft was aloft for less than two minutes.

Around 100 pupils and members of staff saw the helicopter during the two-hour visit.



● Inter-City trains amidst the snowy Alpine scenery of Michelsdorf village – all in Lt Rolf Williams' cabin in HMS Nelson

Bound for Brunei

BASE Warrant Officer Steve Rule has handed his stick to his successor and swapped the South Coast for the Far East.

On his time at HMS Collingwood,

WO Rule said: "I have enjoyed a thoroughly rewarding job for the past two years in a vibrant atmosphere with people who have a 'can do' attitude."

"Sad to be leaving, however that is tempered by the fact that I am being posted to Brunei in an equally-challenging role."

His place at the Fareham training establishment has been taken up by WO Mark Hannibal.

Deep appreciation

FOUR submariners with long careers in nuclear deterrent patrols have been presented with commendations for their personal contributions.

Lt Cdr Colin Torney, Lt Titch Evans, WO Mo Morrison and WO Mo Maloney work for Captain Faslane Flotilla (CAPFASLOT)'s Marine Engineering Department, and between them have amassed

75 deterrent patrols on both Resolution and Vanguard-class boats.

That amounts to a combined career total of 90 years.

CAPFASLOT Capt Andy McKendrick presented the commendations to the four men on behalf of Chief Strategic Systems Executive Rear Admiral Steve Lloyd.

Al makes it a treble

CPO ALAN Wakefield has just completed the treble by completing Submarine Coxswain Qualifying Course.

By doing so he joined WO Mark Harris and CPO Stuart Hawkins in the select branch, which numbers just 40.

And that fact is notable because all three senior rates joined the Royal Navy on the same day – October 14 1985.

Al joined as a Junior Seaman and went on to complete his Submarine Part Three in HMS Trafalgar before joining HMS Triumph in build and staying with her for four years.

He completed several patrols in HMS Vanguard but completed his Coxswain makey-learn on HMS Victorious, and on completion will return as, er, the Coxswain.

WO 'Taff' Harris joined as a Weapons Engineering Mechanic, and after training he joined Polaris submarine HMS Renown.

He stayed on deterrent submarines Victorious and Vengeance until transferring to Coxn(SM) in 2003.

After another stint on a bomber and some time in FOST, he was promoted; after being WO of the



● From left: CPO Alan Wakefield, WO Mark Harris and CPO Stuart Hawkins

RN Submarine School he joined HMS Vigilant in January.

CPO 'Jack' Hawkins joined as a Steward and after training joined HMS Illustrious.

After two years Jack was selected for Royal service and joined the Royal Yacht.

He transferred to submarines in 1991, and has served in four different classes of boat.

He is currently the Submarine Junior Rates Career Manager

Supervisor in Devonport.

Submarine Coxswains enjoy challenging and diverse employment afloat and ashore.

Coxn(SM) is a sideways entry branch open to submariners with at least two years service as PO and a CO's recommendation.

Anyone interested in transferring should contact WO COXN(SM) Andy Jeffery (CWOSM) on 93832 8708, email: FLEET-DNPS PPOL DRST CWOSM WO1.



● Medical staff from HMS Sultan in Downing Street

Landmark tourists

MEMBERS of HMS Sultan's medical staff spent a day looking around London landmarks.

The visit included stops at the Houses of Parliament – with a chance to see the Clock Tower which houses Big Ben – and a stroll up Downing Street.

There was just time to buttonhole a passing politician or

two to ask questions and relate their experiences in Afghanistan before the tourists were off again, this time to the MPs' recreation area back in Parliament, where they enjoyed a drink while spotting famous faces passing through.

The touring team consisted of MAs Sargent, Johnson, Nicholl, Smith and LMA Hackshaw.

Monuments to courage

WALLS, stone slabs, plaques.

Whatever the size of the memorial – from an imposing wall or huge piece of Welsh granite to a brass plaque, whatever the location – a Falklands promontory, a remote fjord, or a mediaeval church by the shores of the Baltic, our debt of gratitude to those who sacrificed their lives for freedom is not forgotten.

Brick by brick, the **Basra Memorial Wall** (pictured below by Cpl Scott Robertson RAF) was taken down by engineers outside the former headquarters of British operations in southern Iraq.

And brick by brick, it took shape anew at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire, where it was formally rededicated on an early spring day.

The brass plaques on the wall name all 178 men and women from the three Services, plus one MOD civilian, killed during Britain's six-year military operation in Iraq.

Some 500 relatives of the fallen joined the Duke of Gloucester, Prime Minister Gordon Brown, defence ministers and senior officers at the service.

The Kent coast was blanketed by snow as one of the most heroic episodes in Fleet Air Arm history was commemorated with the unveiling of a monument, 68 years to the day of the **Channel Dash**.

The seafront at Ramsgate was chosen as the location for the granite block honouring the 18 men of 825 NAS who climbed into their Swordfish bombers to intercept a breakout by the German battleships Gneisenau and Scharnhorst and the cruiser Prinz Eugen.

All six Swordfish were shot down, and all but five of the aircrew were killed. Every one of them was honoured, from CO Lt Cdr Eugene Esmonde who earned the VC to his men who shared four DSOs, one Conspicuous Gallantry Medal and 12 Mentions in Dispatches among them.

It was another 65 years before the Channel Dash Association was formed to publicly celebrate the men's deeds, a celebration which came to fruition on an otherwise bleak February day.

The association's patron Admiral the Lord Boyce unveiled the memorial, while the head of the Fleet Air Arm, Rear Admiral Simon Charlier, read out the names of the Dash heroes.

Before the unveiling, the ashes of Dash survivors Lt Cdr Edgar Lee and S/Lt 'Mac' Samples – both aviators crossed the bar last year – were scattered in the



● (Left) AB Bill Harlow of HMS Penelope shares chocolate with five-year-old Magnus Johan Pedersen in Skjelfjord in May or June 1940 while (above and right) the granite memorials to HMS Glamorgan and the men of the Channel Dash; the former will be dedicated in the Falklands next year, the latter is now in situ on Ramsgate seafront

northern port.

In doing so, however, Cossack received more than half a dozen direct hits from German shells, while Eskimo's bow was blown off by an enemy torpedo in the dying throes of the battle on Saturday April 13 1940.

In the aftermath of battle, both ships were taken to Skjelfjord and provided with escorts, including HMS Penelope, so emergency repairs could be effected.

Eskimo was eventually towed back to Barrow, Cossack made her way to Portsmouth under her own steam. The two ships returned to active duties and continued to serve with distinction.

Locals proved indispensable in helping the British sailors patch up their ships; Cossack responded by throwing a tea party for the Norwegians while a young AB from Penelope, Bill Harlow, shared his bars of chocolate with five-year-old Magnus Johan Pedersen.

After seven decades, Bill and Magnus – who still lives in Skjelfjord – are in touch once more as Norwegians prepare a more permanent 'thank you' to the men of 1940.

A commemorative stone is due to be dedicated in the fjord on August 28, hopefully in the presence of veterans from Penelope and Cossack (both of which have very active associations).

Besides the monument, there will be a small display case detailing the fjord's role in the war, plus benches for visitors to admire this isolated – and beautiful – part of Norway.

In the Baltic, the long-lost dead of His Majesty's Submarine

E18 will be commemorated next month nearly a century after their boat vanished.

Thirty British sailors plus three Russian liaison officers went down on June 1 1916 when E18 either struck a mine or was sunk by gunfire from German surface ships off the island of Hiiumaa in the Gulf of Riga.

Back then, Estonia was part of the Tsarist Russian Empire and British submarines were dispatched to Reval – today the capital Tallinn – to harry German shipping in the Baltic.

The wreck of E18 was found last year by Swedish historian and explorer Carl Douglas and Australian Darren Brown following years of research in international archives to trace the course of that fateful last patrol.

Since that discovery, the relatives of six crewmen have been traced, including those of E18's slightly eccentric CO Lt Cdr Robert Halahan (aside from being particularly superstitious, he also insisted on conducting his ablutions on the surface... occasionally placing his boat in peril).

The Russian Submariners' Club is trying to track down descendants of three Russian officers lost, but as for the relatives of the 24 British crew not yet tracked down, they're invited to contact Robert Davenport, who'll be heading to Estonia at the end of May. Lt Cdr Halahan was his grandmother's first husband; after his death, she married Mr Davenport's grandfather.

Around 12 relatives and veteran submariners will be attending the memorial service as well as visiting historic naval sites in Tallinn over the weekend of May 29 to June 1.

The highlight of the weekend

will be a service of remembrance in Tallinn's Puhavaimu Kirik – Church of the Holy Spirit – for the men of E18 before a plaque is unveiled in their memory.

Details about the commemorations are available from Mr Davenport at Hall Court, Bishops Frome, Herefordshire, WR6 5BY or robertdavenport@btinternet.com.

And so to another impending dedication, half a world away.

By this time next year, a large slab of Welsh granite will stand at Hookers Point, three miles east of Stanley, in the Falklands. It was from here on Saturday June 12 1982 that the Argentines fired an Exocet missile at a blip on a radar screen.

That blip was Her Majesty's Ship **Glamorgan**, manoeuvring away from the Falklands after pounding enemy positions on Two Sisters in support of an assault by 45 Commando.

The destroyer took evasive action, enough to ensure the missile did not impact the ship's side, but struck the aft upper deck and hangar, blowing apart her Wessex helicopter and causing a conflagration. Fourteen men were killed.

Over the ensuing three and a half hours, the ship's company fought to save the destroyer. Aside from tackling the fires, they shifted sacks of potatoes in the galley to improve Glamorgan's stability, while MEM John Whitton swam through compartments flooded with water from the firefighting to open drains.

All of which was rather forgotten in the euphoria of victory; the Argentine surrender in Stanley came just 48 hours after Glamorgan was hit.

Glamorgan's tag as the 'forgotten ship' of the Falklands

War persisted. When her former navigator Ian Inskip visited the islands in back in 2003, he found memorials to every ship lost... but none to the men of Glamorgan.

The ship made it back to Portsmouth thanks, *inter alia*, to a Herculean effort from her crew who patched up the damage with steel abandoned by the Argentinians on South Georgia... and melted down spoons from the wardroom.

Cdr Inskip's visit prompted veterans to raise money for a Glamorgan memorial. Seven years down the line, it's almost finished.

Fittingly, it's carved from polished Welsh granite from the Trefor Quarry, near Pwllheli, and lists the names of all 14 fallen, plus the brief but moving words of the Kohima epitaph.

That centrepiece memorial stone will be surrounded by small square granite setts (symbolising the ship's company) and 14 round ones (for the dead).

A dozen veterans visited North Wales to view progress on the memorial and arrangements are now being made to ship it to the South Atlantic.

To date, the Glamorgan Falklands Association has raised £10,000 of the £12,000 needed to complete the memorial.

REME engineers will install the monument at Hookers Point, aligning it so it faces out towards the point 19 miles away where Glamorgan was hit. The memorial is due to be dedicated in February 2011.

More details about the project – and how to donate to it – can be found at www.hmsglamorgan.co.uk





Helping out – then as now

A DEADLY and devastating earthquake in Haiti.

A Pacific tsunami which killed hundreds of thousands of people.

Violent hurricanes ripping through the Caribbean.

A tropical island almost engulfed by ash and fumes from an unstable volcano.

All natural disasters, and all examples of the cutting-edge humanitarian work done by the Royal Navy, often before civilian organisations are able to react.

The Navy's humanitarian role has become more apparent in recent years with the advent of instant digital media.

But the Navy has been quietly getting on with such tasks for decades – and the most recent catastrophe, the violent earthquake near Concepción in Chile, stirred the collective memory of those who recently marked the 70th anniversary of the Battle of the River Plate.

Because in early 1939, as the clock counted down toward global conflict, the men of the South American Division found themselves on hand when another quake struck the Chilean coast near



● Cdre Henry Harwood in Valparaíso, 1937

Concepción.

Henry and Stephen Harwood, the sons of the senior Naval officer on the scene, take up the story:

On January 24 1939 the South American Division, under Cdre Henry Harwood – cruisers HMS Exeter and HMS Ajax (Capt Charles Woodhouse) – arrived at Valparaíso looking forward to the best run ashore on the west coast of South America.

Some 36 hours leave had been planned for each watch.

They had recently spent a very enjoyable five days at Talcahuano,

the port of Concepción, where they had been lavishly entertained by the local British community.

On the evening of the 24th the first shocks of an earthquake were felt.

By next morning the situation was clarifying and it became clear that Concepción, a city of a million inhabitants 200 miles south of Valparaíso, was very badly affected.

Harwood ordered his ships to short notice and offered help.

Exeter sailed that evening, leaving Ajax to follow with heavy equipment; she anchored off Talcahuano early the next morning.

Three platoons, a demolition party and a medical team were landed; they found an estimated 800 casualties, with many more buried under the rubble.

Almost every building was crumpled, and lines of bodies lay covered in sacks.

A horse pulling a farmer's cart had fallen into a big crack where the road had opened up, and only its head was visible.

The drains had been smashed and the smell was terrible, but the ship's teams worked bare-chested through the long hot day, pulling down and demolishing ruined buildings and sharing their precious



water bottles with the locals.

Exeter later sailed for Valparaíso with 50 British and 350 Chilean refugees.

All were fed on the quarter deck and distributed round the mess decks, where they were treated with traditional naval generosity.

Those who looked particularly dirty were given a steam bath behind a canvas screen.

Amongst the refugees was a young woman with a new-born baby – the child was baptised on board and named Juan Exeter Rivero.

The ship's company had a whip-round for the new arrival.

Two policemen who had come to keep order on board arrested a man for murdering a taxi driver ashore.

An organ grinder and his monkey were (reluctantly) allowed on board and, after being doubly de-loused, gave continuous performances on the quarter deck throughout the voyage.

A midshipman who had spent all day with the working parties ashore wrote to his parents: "The officers all gave up their cabins for the British women, the midshipmen their hammocks for the girls and the Commodore's cabin was used to accommodate the children."

"The men slept in the officers' messes."

● Sailors from HM ships Exeter and Ajax help clear rubble from the streets of Concepción in January 1939 following the earthquake. The picture (right) shows both ships together in Puerto Monte in happier times.

Pictures from Cdre Harwood's private collection

messes.

"We did not sleep at all. I entertained two girls who I knew from previous visits to Talcahuano and the other midshipmen did the same."

"We had an excellent party in the gunroom and the girls were very thrilled by their sea trip."

Ajax carried out a similar routine, and after landing their passengers at Valparaíso they returned south for a second load, with Chilean troops embarked.

They got back to Valparaíso after the second trip at 2200 on January 28, and by then the Chilean authorities had the situation under control.

It is estimated the earthquake killed up to 30,000 people and injured many more.

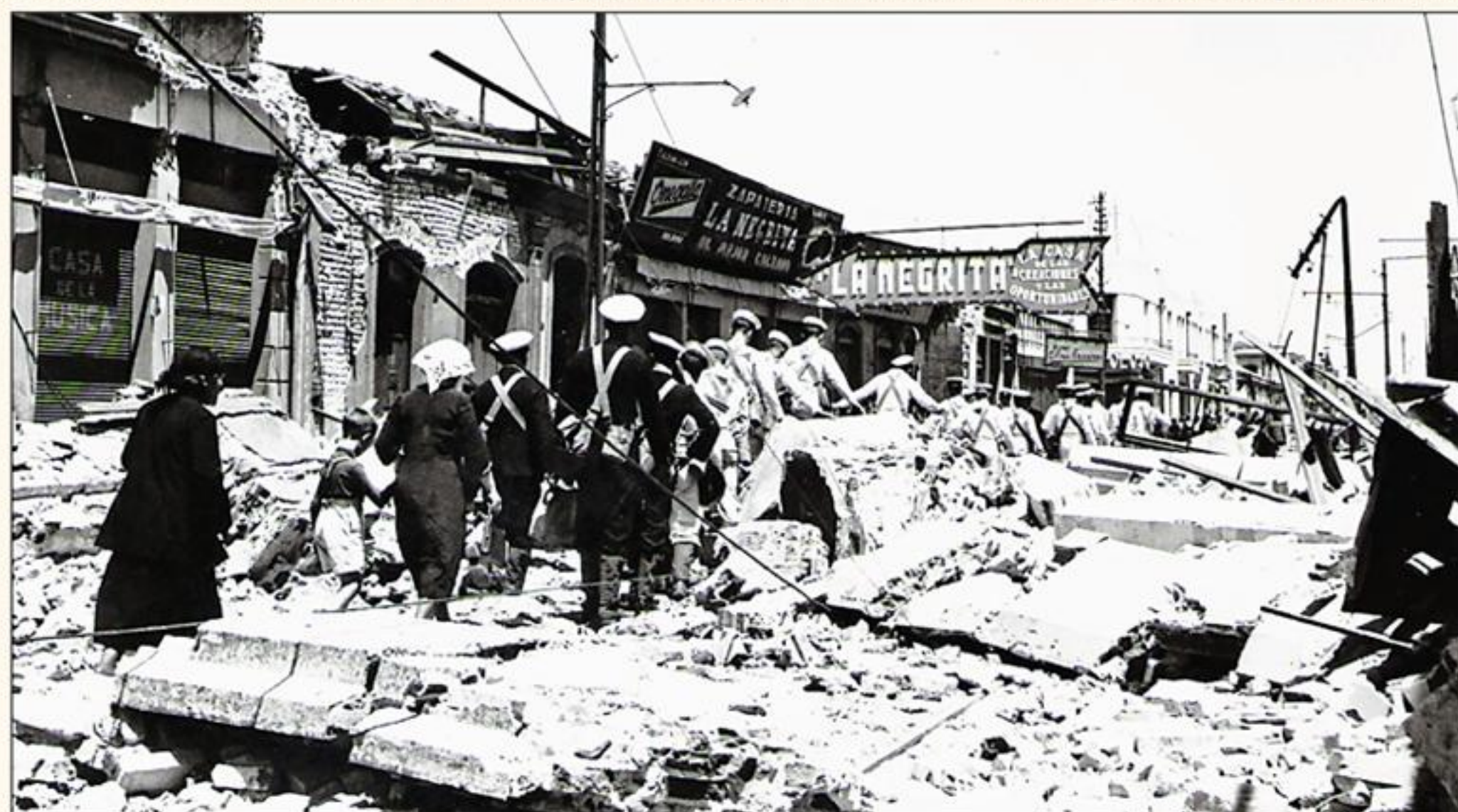
Leave was piped at 2330 and there were some stalwarts not too tired to go ashore.

Then each watch was given 48 hours leave before the two ships resumed their cruise northward.

The rapid and effective response of the South American Division did much to cement the close ties with Britain and respect for the Royal Navy which had existed since the early 19th century and was to be of great advantage to Britain during the forthcoming war.

A total of 41 medals were awarded to the officers and ships' companies and, later, every member of the two ships' companies was awarded a special medal.

It would be less than a year before Harwood's squadron, augmented by the New Zealand-manned cruiser Achilles (Capt Parry) would drive the German pocket battleship Graf Spee to seek shelter in Montevideo, and shortly afterward scuttle herself.



● Zulu Company, 45 Cdo, brought to shore by landing craft

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Husbands



● HMS Ocean basking in the Norwegian sunshine

Picture: LA(Phot) (A very cold) Bernie Henesy



● Landing Platform Dock (Auxiliary) RFA Mounts Bay working with landing craft



● Zulu Company, 45 Cdo, ashore during Exercise Cold Response

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Husbands

Mosaic in mot

IT'S COLD in Norway. This is no revelation to you, o reader. And no revelation to the 8,500 people from 14 nations who have been exercising amid the frozen hills and fjords on Cold Response.

Amphibious operations always call to mind a complex interlocking mosaic of sea, land and air operations as the punch of the green-bereted ground troops are launched from ship to shore by helicopter and landing craft.

And so to this year's Cold Response, where British ships HMS Albion, HMS Ocean, RFA Wave Knight and RFA Mounts Bay joined forces with the Dutch assault ship HMNLS Johan de Witt, which played host to the command staff of the UK Amphibious Task Force.

The 88 Brits formed the core of the Maritime Component Command on the Dutch ship, which suffered a further squeeze when 356 embarked military forces – 45 Commando's Yankee Company and the US Marine Corps Fox Company of the 2nd Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment – came on board at the height of the exercise.

The Johan de Witt, a Rotterdam-class assault ship, should not have proven too alien to its RN and RM visitors, as the first Rotterdam served as the blueprint for the Bay-class RFAs in the British fleet.

This is the first time since 2005 that the American marines have taken part in Cold Response; although they obviously relished working with their British counterparts.

Lt Col Anthony Lanza, the battalion's commanding officer, said: "We came into this exercise with the goal of training alongside our NATO allies, getting Marines back on ship, and planning and executing cold weather operations."

The US Marines enjoyed getting the chance to work within the British command team – "Our staff was able to learn the terms, language and procedures of the other militaries involved in the exercise," he said.

"Our Marines seamlessly filled several billets under the British command."

"We will walk away from this with new experiences, new knowledge and even some new friends as well."

Maj Erik Norton, CO of Fox Company, described their experiences out in the field: "The terrain was physically tough, rocky and mountainous."

"You take a few steps into the snow and it might

feel strong, then you take another few steps and fall through deep snow. The Marines did a great job considering they had never really dealt with this before."

Of course, for the Royal Marines and their cold weather expertise, the arduous of Norway are a regular event. But it seems that the Americans brought a few new tricks to the icy training.

The US Marines ran martial arts training inside HMS Ocean's vast helicopter hangar under their Marine Corps Martial Arts Programme (MCMAP).

Staff Sgt Justino Vasquez, a MCMAP black-belt instructor trainer, said of his RM brethren: "They are more into boxing, but they are interested in the programme."

"The first day we had two Royal Marines, but their numbers at least doubled every day since."

Royal Marine Capt Ross Drinkwater, in charge of 45 Cdo's Mortar Troop, was one of the participants: "The programme was well delivered and easy to understand. It seem to be based around large, basic moves, which can be achieved wearing fighting order."

For the Royal Marines, Cold Response followed on from their eight weeks of cold-weather training on the ground in Exercise Lupus 2.

Cold Response brought the ground forces back on board ship in a scenario designed to test the UK and other nation's ability at maritime theatre entry – or getting your troops ashore when access from land isn't an option.

The ships, aircraft and marines made their presence felt from the sea until the demand came for forces pushed ashore.

Among Commando Helicopter Force assets gathered in the frozen north were two Sea Kings from 845 and 846 Naval Air Squadrons and four green Lynx from 847 NAS.

These were also featured in CHF's annual Clockwork deployment to Bardufoss, which saw some 200 people put through their paces in cold-weather flying, and the Naval pilots hosted Chinooks, green Merlins and Pumas from the Joint Helicopter Command.

● Offshore Raiding Craft carrying Royal Marines

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Husbands



Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Husbands



tion

Back at sea, Cold Response lived up to its name, as during the exercise the ships' landing craft and flight-decks were covered in a thick coating of ice in the sub-zero temperatures. And let's not even mention the effect of the cold on the divers of Fleet Diving Unit 2...

Lt Gen Bernt I F Brovold, Chief of the Norwegian Joint Headquarters, thanked the men and women who took part in Cold Response 2010, saying: "Our guests at the Cold Response exercise series keep telling us that 'If you can fight in extreme arctic conditions like those in Norway – you can fight anywhere in the world.'"

"I hope that our contribution to your troops will give them that extra bit of knowledge to keep them safe and able."

"Many of us will meet again under grave circumstances, in areas of conflict, facing danger together."

"Before we join forces to meet our real challenges, Cold Response offers a chance to practise. What better way is there to ensure effective cooperation between NATO members and our partners."

A statement echoed by Maj Gen Buster Howes, Commander UK Amphibious Forces and Maritime Component Commander for the Task Force: "The exercise takes place in a challenging arctic climate where seconds count and can be the difference between life and death."

"Put simply, if you can soldier here, you can soldier anywhere."

Summing up the deployment, the Commanding Officer of 45 Commando, Lt Col Oliver Lee, said: "This deployment has provided a unique opportunity to refresh some of our essential core amphibious and cold weather skills in the harshest environment there is."

"The training has been progressive, challenging, rewarding and, at times, fun."

He added: "As ever, the defining feature of the trip has been marines rising admirably to every challenge, proving their ability to survive, move and fight in the harshest of conditions."



● A CHF Lynx from 847 NAS



● ORCS come ashore

Picture: LA(Phot) (A very cold) Bernie Henesy



● Zulu Company, 45 Cdo, hit the shore

Picture: LA(Phot) Nick Tryon



● Ice climbing by RMS

Picture: PO(Phot) Dave Husbands



● NA(AH) Balfs Balfre tries to warm up from the flightdeck of HMS Ocean

Picture: LA(Phot) (A very cold) Bernie Henesy



● RMS board an 846 NAS Sea King

Picture: LA(Phot) (A very cold) Bernie Henesy



● The aurora borealis over the flightdeck of HMS Ocean

Picture: LA(Phot) (A very cold) Bernie Henesy



● From sea to shore – Royal Marines test their mettle at cold-weather warfare

Picture: LA(Phot) (A very cold) Bernie Henesy



● Tiffies in the mechanics laboratory in HMS Fisgard picking up the finer points of centrifugal force from instructor Lt Ralph Thomas. The photo in the Navy News file is undated but we guess from the 1970s.

Tiffies in training

THE PASSING-OUT of the last artificers at HMS Sultan certainly marks the end of an era – some 142 years to be precise.

Timely, perhaps, to draw to the attention of tiffies past and present the naval documentary film *Tiffy (Naval Artificer)* of 1950, with a commentary by Bruce Belfrage, that follows the training of these young men at HMS Fisgard in the post-war years.

It is still available on the DVD entitled *The Royal Navy – At War and Peace 1952-1960* released in 2006.

The 30-minute black and white film begins with the teenage recruits having a pillow fight and the instructor CPO Artificer doing his rounds at pipe down – the blue and white bedpans, with the anchor at the centre, will be familiar.

The film has a good script and, as the chief opens the door and sees the aftermath of the pillow

fight, asks: "Where do you think you are? In the wardroom?"

The film has excellent footage of tiffies of different trades at work on board the aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious*, beginning with preparations for putting to sea and shows not only the sort of work they do but the results and effects of their efforts.

There is footage of tiffies with small ships, too, at the MTB base at HMS *Hornet* in Gosport and in the submarine HMS *Sanguine* and destroyer HMS *Roebuck*, the carrier's destroyer plane guard.

This film serves as a salute to anyone who was a tiffy or whose father or grandfather served in the post-war Navy, particularly in the engineering branches.

Hopefully, some readers will recognise their father or grandfather.

– Lester May,
Camden Town, London

Tot – what rot!

THANK YOU for printing my letter (March) referring to the lack of 'splicers' last year for Fly Navy 100.

I was quite surprised at your response, informing readers that Splicers had been ordered on May 7.

Since my letter was published, I have asked a few questions around the bazaars and come up with the following points.

I was embarked on HMS *Illustrious* with 824 NAS at the time of the celebrations in London, and I am 100 per cent certain that there was no tot issued onboard during that period – we disembarked back to Culdrose on May 25.

I have also spoken to the catering offices at both major RN

Air Stations (sorry, Prestwick) and neither office has any record of a tot being issued ashore at that time.

Command at Culdrose have also confirmed that they have no record of the signal being received last year.

So a somewhat puzzling turn of events it seems! Was the signal issued?

If 'yes,' why was it not received by the RN Air Stations afloat and ashore?

If 'no,' why was it not issued if in fact Splicers had been ordered? I'm not asking for the tot to be issued – refer to Jackspeak and my original letter for the reasons why!

– CPOACMN J J Walker,
RNAS Culdrose

Mustachioed mystery

INTHE Mediterranean, in 1944, I joined the Algerine-Class minesweeper HMS *Acute* and found, among the ship's company, an elderly Leading Signaller named Codrington who, to my amazement, sported a large and bushy moustache.

He claimed that he belonged to an obscure Fleet reserve which, contrary to naval custom, permitted him to have this adornment of his upper lip.

Neither the captain, nor anyone else, could discover anything about this odd qualification and so he was allowed to continue unshaven... and unsailorlike!

I wonder – did such a regulation really exist, or was he pulling the wool, or hair, over our eyes?

– Mike Alston, Hon Sec HMS Middleston (L74) Association,
Maidenhead, Berks

Return to Narvik

THIS MONTH sees the 70th anniversary of the Battle of Narvik, when on April 13 1940 the battleship HMS *Warspite* and her escort entered Norwegian waters and destroyed eight German destroyers.

These were the main part of the German fleet and a potential menace to the evacuation of the Norwegian Royal family and the country's gold reserves.

It was the biggest confrontation of naval strength since Jutland as almost 20 warships hurled shells at short range and torpedoes zigzagged through the ice-cold waters of the fjord.

With the smoke of battle clinging to the surface of the water and avalanches disturbed by the tremendous vibrations it was a scene that will never be forgotten by those who were there to witness it.

As a 22-year-old Royal Marine I have vivid recollections of that part of the world.

As the oldest publicity officer in the country at 92 years of age it will not be an effort for me to revisit.

I leave for Copenhagen on April 12 and then to Oslo and Narvik, where I intend to lay a wreath of English poppies on the cold waters of Ofotfjord.

With beer at £8 a pint I shall only be staying for five days.

This time I shall travel in style on Scandinavian Airways. In 1940 I travelled in cold comfort as No 1 of the Royal Marines 15th turret on board the battleship HMS *Warspite*.

To HMS *Hunter*, HMS *Hardy*, HMS *Cossack* and others – *You are not forgotten*.

– Bernard Hallas, RMA
Association, Haxby, York

...I WAS in the second battle of Narvik in HMS *Warspite*.

We sank nine German destroyers before tea.

After tea we went to sea and buried casualties from our

Met men in the Med

THE PHOTOGRAPH on page 34 (January) of HMS *Indomitable* and HMS *Charybdis* in August 1942 reminds me of November 1942 in Gibraltar.

HMS *Charybdis* took me and two other Ordinary Seamen (Met) of the Fleet Air Arm, and as Instructor Commander to Algiers in November at the time of the invasion.

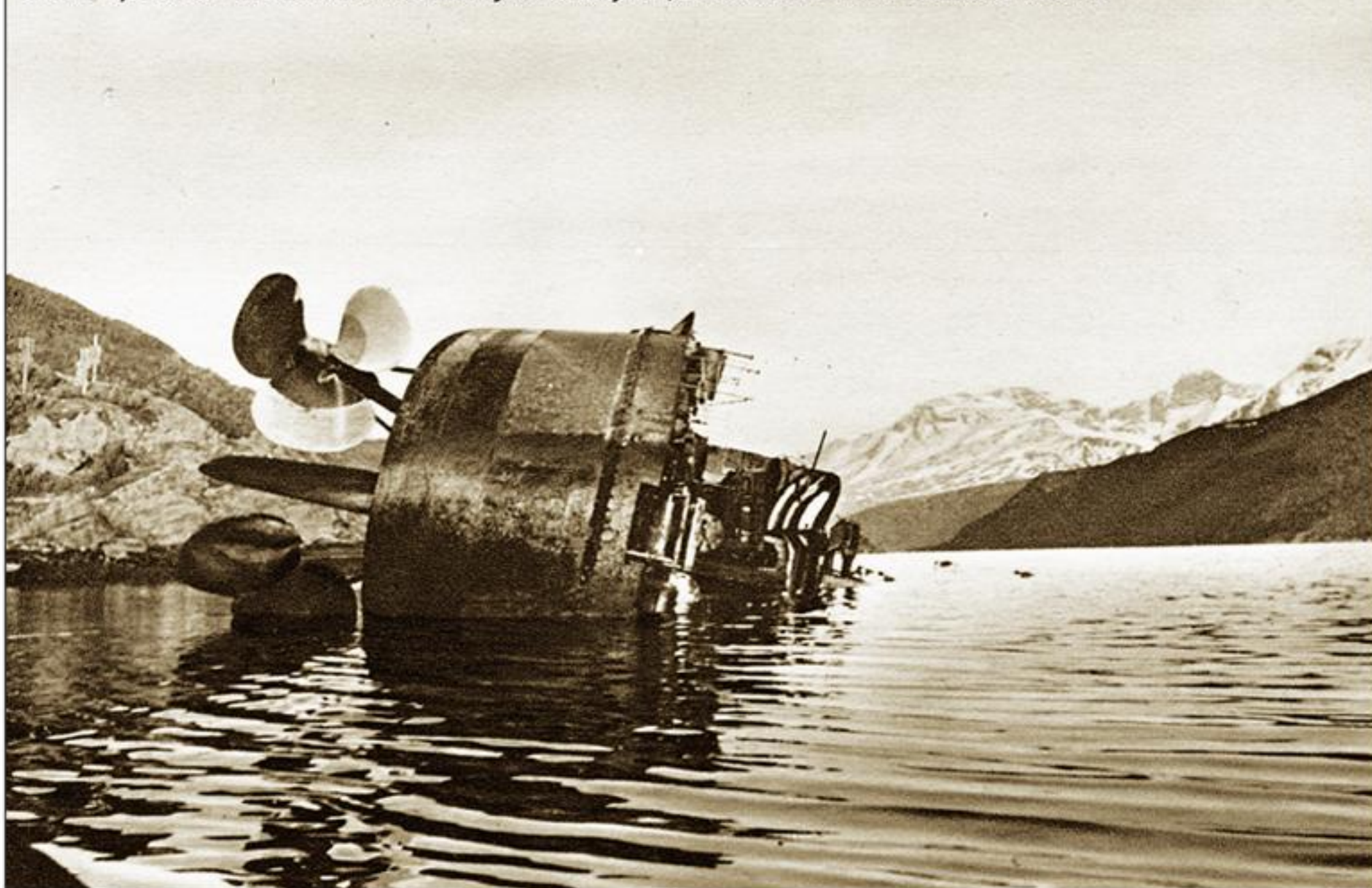
The weather was atrocious and an American Army officer was washed overboard.

In Algiers we set up the Mediterranean Fleet Meteorological Office for Adm Cunningham in the commandeered trans-Med ship *Ville d'Oran*, eventually transferring to AFHQ in Algiers and in 1944 to Caserta, near Naples, with periods on HMS *Largs* for the invasion of Italy in 1943, and southern France in 1944.

After three years, I returned home as a PO Met.

– John Physick, ex-Chief
Airman Met, RNVF, Meopham,
Gravesend, Kent

● The upturned wreck of HMS *Hardy* in Ofotfjord, sunk in the First Battle of Narvik



destroyer, boys amongst them from HMS *Eskimo* – those Tribal-class destroyers were the first ones that carried boys in their crew.

There but the grace of God go I.

We will remember them.

– Roy Emmington, Chatham,
Kent

...THE FRIENDS of Namsos War Memorial (FONMW) have been trying to persuade the Admiralty to send a ship or perhaps an Admiral to the 70th anniversary of the Norwegian campaign.

Now we learn that the French navy is sending FS Premier-Maitre L'Her to Namsos with descendants of the captain of a French ship sunk in the area.

How will Norwegians regard our inactivity?

Should the Royal Navy not also have a presence there?

– Lawrie Douglas, FONWM

...My FATHER, Cyril Cope, was the instigator and founding member of the 2nd Destroyer Flotilla of Narvik April 10 1940.

Cyril passed away in 2003 and left me a number of audio tapes of his experience, including a first-hand account of the Battle of Narvik.

He was in the unique position on the upperdeck as a torpedo man to witness all.

The transcript I made of his tapes describes what happened on abandoning ship, and what happened to the survivors who got ashore, the assistance offered by the Norwegians and how they were repatriated on HMS *Ivanhoe*.

There is also an excellent website submerged.co.uk which has many photos and details about Narvik.

I am hoping that more people will contact me whose families

were involved, to enable me to write a book.

– Ron Cope, Telford,
Shropshire

Shipmate Bernard Hallas received a grant from the Heroes Return programme towards his expenses.

The Big Lottery Fund which runs the scheme has produced a film showing some of the veterans' return trips.

The link is www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_heroes_return and there is also a blog on heroesreturn.org showing the veterans talking about their visits.

Both can be accessed through the Navy News website. Cyril Cope's memories of Narvik can be found on the Navy News website under Have Your Say – Dittybox.

See the centre for our Narvik supplement.

Picture: Cpl S Dove AGC



Burning and turning

I WOULD like to draw your attention to the article on page 7 (March) about the CHF squadrons in Afghanistan.

I read with interest the paragraph which says: "In July, temperatures nudge 50°C (122°F) which forces engineers to work at first or last light or during the hours of darkness."

Since joining 845 Squadron in 2006 I have served in Sierra Leone, Iraq, northern Norway and Afghanistan, where I am currently serving.

I would like to assure your readership that when one of our aircraft becomes u/s (unserviceable) we work to repair it, regardless of the time of day or night and regardless of the temperature whether it be +50°C or -20°C.

– PO Michael Weller,
845 NAS,
Sea King Mk4 det,
Camp Bastion



A £25 Amazon voucher to the letter which amuses, impresses or enlightens us the most.

opinion

SO an ERA comes to an end for the Tiffies – the branch whose members have kept the Navy afloat since Engine Room Artificers were introduced in the 1860s.

From the days of steam propulsion onwards the Tiffies have been the ones who "kept the engines turning, the guns firing, the ships floating, the electrical equipment working and the aircraft flying," as former Tiffy Gil Harding put it.

Tiffies have always been held in high regard for their brainpower (their entrance exams were the toughest of all) and their ability to apply it.

Several artificers reached flag rank, and nearly 50 per cent of all engineer officers are former Tiffies.

There are legendary accounts of Tiffies and their skills, from the submariner who made himself a new wristwatch when his broke, to the Tiffy who diagnosed a problem in a diesel engine that had stumped everyone at the manufacturers for months.

So it's a sad farewell to the old Artificers, but the branch will pass its baton to the Engineering Technicians.

As Capt Graham Watts, Captain RN School of Marine Engineering, said: "We're still delivering advanced apprenticeships and the artificers' skills, especially their ability to diagnose a problem, are as much in demand as ever."

"The name may have gone, but the skills live on."



Editorial

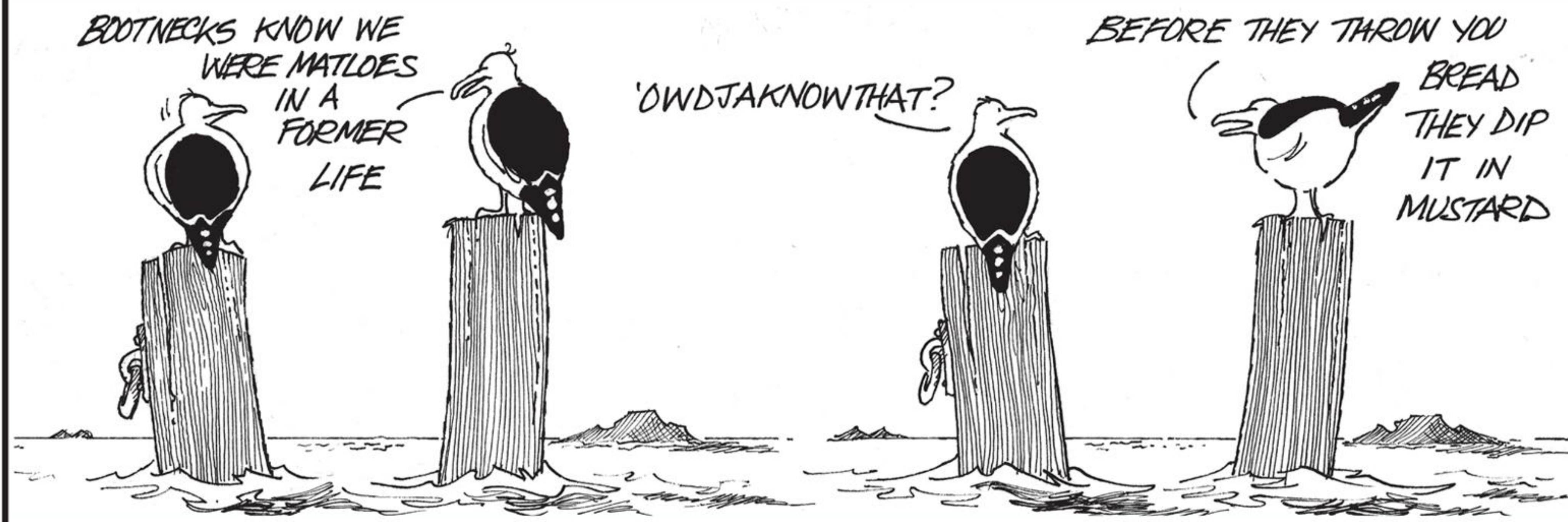
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CLASSIC
JACK

BY TUGS

**A' huntin with the Quorn**

IT SEEMS as though HMS Quorn is bidding fair to stake her claim to be named the flagship of *Navy News*, since her exploits are a regular feature of the paper's columns.

Since I served for 14 months in World War 2 on her namesake, any story about the ship commands my close attention.

Her connection with Melton Mowbray reminds me of those delicious pork pies that I have hungered for since we left England for Florida some 52 years ago.

Sadly, import restrictions on this side of the pond have denied me that gourmet delight.

As for the mention about Quorn and other Hunts sinking the armed merchant raider Komet, I well remember that night.

We had several motor torpedo boats (MTBs) in company, and I believe it was one of them that delivered the coup de grace to the Komet with a torpedo.

Luckily for me, long before Quorn was sunk I had been sent to HMS Anderson in Ceylon to listen to Japanese wireless signals.

I have seen the Quorn casualty list on the HMS Cavalier website, some of them telegraphists with whom I served.

From the 'Sunshine State' I send greetings to the crew of Quorn, and look forward to reading more about their exploits in the future.

— Ken Tipper, Ocala, Florida



● Picture by courtesy of the Imperial War Museum

What's my line?

I HAVE been reading your excellent magazine for a number of years now.

Being an ex-CS Navy man I understand a lot of what is reported, but I am becoming bemused by the new ratings.

For example, in the recent edition there was mention of:

Llogs(CS(P))
AB(CIS)
ET(ME)
LPT
LA/POA(SE)

Who are these people, and what jobs do they do?

Their arm badges are also mysterious, the only one recently that I recognised was on the arm of MA Kate Nesbitt at the medal presentation.

Bless her, she is the best advert the Navy has had for some time.

I know that a lot of non-service people read your magazine and it would be a great help to them and me if you could occasionally insert short articles on ratings, their badges and brief descriptions of their jobs.

— N A Loake, ex-Boy Tel
Radio Mechanic, REA, Rothwell,
Kettering, Northants

...COULD *Navy News* please publish a list of the current acronyms/initialisms that get bandied about in the modern Navy?

When I was "released to the Reserve" I was rated REM.

Yes, that was 1949.

Having spent my years of gainful employment in other fields, I am now baffled by the abbreviations that I come across while reading my copies.

For the sake of us old-timers at least, can we have an annotated list of the current trades, ranks and rates, please?

— Martin 'Taff' Evans
You're confused? So are we. If we can sort them out we will let you know... — Ed

Mixed messages

PRESENTATION and news coverage seemed to be the popular items in the February issue and my letter is going to continue the theme.

My target is Capt Durkin's article *Our Man in Kabul* which leaves me asking, where does he collect his information regarding the extensive coverage of events by our media including the BBC? Because I am absolutely disgusted with the lack of such information.

Our forces most definitely do not get daily coverage on the popular main channels, nor in the national press. I scan both each day with disappointing results.

When there is something to report, including casualties, it usually follows well down on the agenda behind much less important items of news.

I give an instance, quite recently an entertainer committed suicide, the BBC led with the news of such, spent five minutes (I timed it) covering the matter, pressed on with other items and then, almost in passing, reported the death of a

Grenadier in Helmand.

That is not an isolated occurrence.

A further example, the BBC presenter stated we would now see our reporter with the British forces in action in the co-ordinated action in Afghan, we were then shown Americans in action and this has been the theme throughout, very little of British involvement.

The total obsession with others rather than the British.

As for daily reports, please let us know from which channel you receive this wonderful coverage because I have not seen what you claim.

The press is no better, their front pages and lead articles deal with Bafta awards, bank managers' perks, or the American golfer's sex affairs and so on!

If only *Our Man in Kabul* could get the facts right and present the true picture of inadequate reporting of the involvement of British forces.

— Harry Withers, Skegness,
Lincolnshire

As I recall...

I WAS sitting awaiting my appointment with the dentist when I picked up the November issue of *Navy News*.

I was a pilot with the Fleet Air Arm from May 1954 until May 1962 and viewed with interest the article and photograph entitled *Naming Eagle's Squadrons*.

I was a member of 897 Squadron and involved in the Suez Operation.

Unfortunately Bill Drake, Electrical Officer on 897, has misnamed a number of the people in the photograph, you might like to correct some of the mistakes.

1 — Lin Middleton, 897 NAS;
2 — 'Jock' Hare, 897 NAS;
3 — Tim Sampler, 897 NAS;
4 — Gerry Maynard, 897 NAS;
5 — Cannot remember his name but he died in an air accident about two years after returning to the UK; 6 — Pete Newman, Air Weapons Officer 899 NAS;
7 — 'Dickie' Wren, 899 NAS, who was Commander Air at RNAS Yeovilton in the mid-60s;
8 — myself, Lt W Graham (how could Bill Drake forget me!);
9 — Tony (forgotten surname) 897 NAS.

I also enclose a photograph of the 897 pilots taken on HMS Eagle at Malta, I name the pilots, as many as I can remember (one does tend to forget at the age of 78).

— I W Graham,
Billingborough, Lincs



● Front row, left to right, Lin Middleton; Tim Sampler; Keith Leopard; senior pilot, Ray Rawbone 'The Boss'; The Engineering Officer (forgotten name, also forgotten the pilot sitting next to the Engineering Officer; Don Mills. Back row, left to right: myself; Bill Graham; Dave Prothero; Gerry Maynard; 'Horse' Williams; Bill Drake; Ted Sutcliffe; Sub Lt White who died shortly after the photograph was taken in an air accident; 'Jock' Hare. Photo supplied by I W Graham

LETTERS to the editor should always be accompanied by the correspondent's name and address, not necessarily for publication.

E-mail correspondents are also requested to provide this information. Letters cannot be submitted over the telephone.

If you submit a photograph which you did not take yourself, please make sure that you have the permission for us to publish it.



Given the volume of letters, we cannot publish all of your correspondence in *Navy News*.

We do, however, publish many on our website, www.navynews.co.uk, accompanied by images.

We look particularly for correspondence which stimulates debate, makes us laugh or raises important issues.

The editor reserves the right to edit your submissions.

Pooling memories

MY World War 2 days were spent in HMS Ferret, Londonderry, as a seaman torpedoman.

I was a pool rating and would be drafted to ships to replace other torpedomen when they were ill or on compassionate leave.

I served on four ships, HMS Dart, Duncan, Pevensey Castle and Loch Dunvegan.

The time I was on board depended on the period the Seaman Torpedoman would be absent from his ship.

The reason I write to you is that I have never yet met or heard of a pool rating, so maybe through your letters page I will have confirmation that my memory is serving me correctly when I swing the lamp.

— W Craven, President, Sidmouth RNOCA, Sidmouth



'ONCE NAVY, ALWAYS NAVY'

TV show features old press

A PROP in a popular TV drama once belonged to a former shipmate in the Cheshunt branch.

S/M Norman Reeves, who crossed the bar in 2008, had an old printing press in his garden shed which he inherited from his dad, said branch PRO S/M James Murphy.

"He amused himself printing other organisations' and RNA branches' menus and tickets, also turning out the HMS Dahlia Christmas cards – the warship adopted by Cheshunt during World War 2.

"When he died, his wife could not find a buyer, until it was bought some time afterwards by the BBC."

It has now turned up on BBC1's *Lark Rise to Candleford*, featuring in recent episodes as a new local paper is set up in the fictional town of Candleford.

Tankards for two

A PRESENTATION has been made to two founder members of Wetherby branch at their AGM.

S/Ms Richard Knight, branch secretary, and Vince Parks, social secretary, were awarded their engraved 'Naval Shilling' tankards, along with scrolls from the branch president S/M Eric Drummond.

S/M Eric told those gathered that the awards were made in gratitude for the dedicated service given by the pair to the branch since it was founded in 1996.

They have also put in plenty of effort as founders of the HMS Ceres Association to the benefit of shipmates and those who served at Ceres before it closed in 1958.

Cossacks in Pompey

VETERANS from HMS Cossack will descend on Portsmouth this month for their annual reunion weekend.

The programme, from Friday April 9 to Monday April 12, includes the association's AGM and formal gala dinner, while a church service at St Anne's in the Naval Base is followed by a march-past and parade.

Members will be using the Royal Beach Hotel in Southsea as their base, and the association's archives will be on display in the Fearless Suite throughout.

■ Battle of Narvik special supplement inside this edition

Glorious plea

ANYONE interested in attending the church service marking the 70th anniversary of the sinking of HMS Glorious and her consorts will need to make contact with one of the organisers first.

The service, in memory of the aircraft carrier Glorious and destroyers Ardent and Acasta, will be held at St Nicholas' Church in HMS Drake on Sunday June 6.

Those wishing to attend should contact S/M George Lowden on 0191 262 7878 in advance.

Gunners meet up 40 years on



EX-POMPEY field gunners held a 40-year mini-reunion – which also gave them the chance to catch up with a field gun legend.

The ruby jubilee was hosted by Brian Godsell who, because of health problems, is now in a wheelchair, and Sue, who (according to our correspondent, Ray T Ayre) "gives 100 per cent love and attention for this Field Gun legend."

Present and correct from the crew of 1969 were 'Cowboy' Beales, 'Barny' Barnard, 'Tommy'

Steele, Toni Bramall, Micky Dilks, Paul Overton and Ray T Ayre (pictured left).

"It was a great evening, with many run ashore stories being bandied about – plus the odd few drinks at the residents' hotel bar until 3.30am," said Ray.

Ray served in HMS ships Whirlwind, Aurora and Hermes as well as putting in a stint with the Portsmouth Command field gun crew, and he went on to complete a further career in Civvy Street as a police officer.

Gib reunion recalls submarine explosion

FORTY years ago, in the early hours of February 12 1970, submarine HMS Auriga was passing through the Strait, 27 miles from Gibraltar, when an explosion shook the boat.

The tank under No1 battery, in the bow, had detonated following a build-up of hydrogen.

"Luckily we were on the surface at the time otherwise we would all have been fishmeal," said Stewart 'Stormy' Bullard.

"As it was, about ten of the 65 guys on board were injured, mainly burns and a couple of broken limbs.

"The sea was calm that night so we were able to make our way unassisted into Gibraltar, where we stayed for several weeks until the boat had been repaired enough to be able to sail for Plymouth."

Stewart was one of a group of Auriga veterans who were back on the Rock to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the incident.

The trip was organised by Jackie Hutching, whose husband Derek was on Auriga at the time.

"We started to have reunions of Auriga's crew about eight years ago," said Jackie.

"We take it in turn to organise an annual event.

"We felt we should do something special for the 40th anniversary so we've come back to Gibraltar – this is the first time we've had a reunion here."

"We are staying at the Caleta because, when we came ashore in 1970, we were put into the Caleta

Palace Hotel, as it was known then," added Stewart.

During their visit to the Tower, they were briefed by the Queen's Harbour Master, Lt Cdr Nick Chapman, himself a submariner.

"It was good for the submariners from HMS Auriga to return to Gibraltar to see where their injured comrades were treated and their submarine repaired," said Nick.

"The visit provided the opportunity to highlight the continuing importance of Gibraltar in supporting Fleet operations.

"Talking to the veterans, I discovered that I had served with one of them in the 1980s and it brought back many happy memories of my own time on board diesel submarines."

"Not everyone has been able to make this reunion because of illness," said Jackie.

"And, indeed, we still haven't been able to make contact with some of Auriga's ship's company from 1970.

"But we're hoping to have another reunion in Chatham in June, so perhaps we'll have found some more of them by then."

"Gibraltar has changed a lot in the last 40 years," added Stewart.

"Some of our old drinking haunts seem to have disappeared..."

The 1,590-ton Amphion-class boat, launched at the end of World War 2, served a further four years before being scrapped in 1975.

Any Auriga veterans from the time of the incident are invited to contact the group via andriga@blueyonder.co.uk



● Former submariners from HMS Auriga and their partners – plus mascot Andriga – at the Tower on the Gibraltar dockyard waterfront

Picture: Cpl Ralph Merry RAF

Russian medal now available

BY DECREE of the President of the Russian Federation, the Russian Government has struck a commemorative medal to mark the 65th anniversary of the victory in the Great Patriotic War against the common enemy in World War 2, according to S/M Peter Skinner.

British veterans who served on the Arctic convoys to North Russia, and who hold one or more of the commemorative medals already issued, can now apply for one of these medals.

There will be two presentations at the Russian Embassy in London, on April 29 and May 4, both starting at 11am.

Numbers are restricted to 30

on each day, but veterans can be accompanied by no more than two family members.

Applicants will need to send full name, permanent address, telephone number and a copy of the certificates of medals already issued, plus full name, address and telephone number of any family members attending.

Also required will be an

Drink up and support charity

A BEER produced by Summerskills Brewery in Plymouth will be raising funds for the local branch.

Money from the sale will go towards the Plymouth branch for

indication of which presentation you would like to attend.

Anyone unable to travel to London should also apply, marking the application accordingly.

Medals will be sent by Royal Mail at a later date.

Applications should be sent to Peter A Skinner, The Anchorage, Higher Clovelly, Bideford, Devon EX39 5RR.

its charitable work – the brewery produces a charity beer every year.

The label features the Devonport Division cry of "Oggie, Oggie, Oggie."

Lucky escape at River Plate

ONE of our correspondents has contacted us to clarify a detail over the Battle of the River Plate.

S/M Peter Danks, secretary of the HMS Ajax and River Plate Veterans Association, said: "With reference to an article on page 34 of the March *Navy News* headed 'Model way to mark birthday', there is a correction to the statement by S/M John Hudson.

"He may well have met Mr Sam Shale, a retired colour sergeant Royal Marines who was serving as a Royal Marine in HMS Ajax at

the Battle of the River Plate at a lunch in December.

"But the X Turret in HMS Ajax was always manned by Royal Marines and Sam Shale actually swapped places with a Cpl Bashford, not a POGI.

"Bashford was unfortunately killed in the action, and every year Sam pays his own tribute by laying a wreath on Remembrance Sunday in memory of his pal Cpl Bashford, who he owes his life to having agreed to swap places in the turret prior to the battle."



● Pictured above is the RNA Memorial in Dartmouth, erected and dedicated by the local branch in 2003. Every year, on Remembrance Day, following the town's parade and service, the branch holds its own service at the memorial. Shipmates know of a similar type of monument in Malta, but believe it may be unique as being the only one of its kind in the UK – unless you know better, of course...

Naval Quirks

CAPTAIN (LATER ADMIRAL) PAKENHAM WAS AN RN OBSERVER WITH THE JAPANESE IN THEIR WAR WITH RUSSIA IN 1904-05..



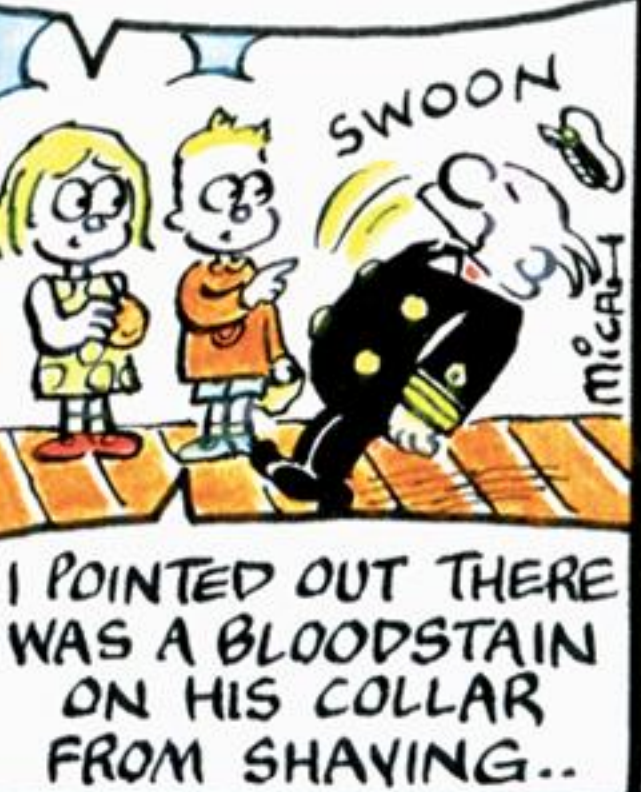
.. AT THE BATTLE OF TSUSHIMA HIS SHIP "MIKASA" WAS HIT, HIS IMMACULATE WHITE UNIFORM COVERED IN CREWMEN'S BLOOD, AND HE PROMPTLY WENT BELOW..



.. JUST WHEN THE JAPANESE WERE QUESTIONING HIS BRAVERY, HE RE-EMERGED HAVING CHANGED INTO A NEW CLEAN WHITE UNIFORM!



WHAT HAPPENED ?





Pershire stops to salute Percy

PERSHORE High Street was brought to a standstill as the local branch paid their last respects to one of their founder members.

Following a funeral service in Pershore Abbey with full Naval honours, the horse-drawn hearse bearing the coffin of S/M Percy Newell and the funeral cortege processed up the High Street through an RNA guard of honour outside the Naval Social Club, where both Pershore and Tewkesbury branch standards were lowered.

Percy had volunteered for service in the Royal Navy and was called up in 1943 when he was 19.

He trained at HMS Ganges, then joined destroyer HMS Caprice which successfully escorted four merchant convoys to Russia.

She also escorted regular convoys and joined U-boat hunts, as well as shepherding troopships bringing American soldiers to the UK for the D-Day landings.

Percy, an AB Torpedoman First Class, was known to the captain as a lousy shot with a pistol – in the old man's words "he was the only sailor who could miss the sea when shooting..."

Demobbed in August 1946, he returned home to Pershore where he and his wife Vera raised their family and ran the Brandy Cask pub for many years.

He also joined the RNA branch at the inaugural meeting set up by chairman S/M Ted Annis in September 2002.

S/M Percy, who died at the age of 86, is survived by his three daughters and son.

Bourne romantic

MORE than 30 members and guests of Bourne branch enjoyed a Valentine's Day lunch – Christmas postponed due to bad weather.

Everyone enjoyed a three-course meal, the wine flowed freely – and £91 was raised for branch funds.

Les pays tribute at Okinawa Peace Park

HAVING read the account of the Forgotten Fleets service of remembrance in the March edition of *Navy News*, Les Wills contacted us with his account of another pilgrimage to the Far East earlier this year:

I enlisted at HMS St George, Isle of Man, as a Boy in 1943 and joined HMS Indefatigable at Scapa in 1944, writes Les, who is chairman, secretary and treasurer of the HMS Indefatigable Association.

I left her in May 1946 having served on board during the whole of the commission in the Far East. During that time we took part in the invasion of Okinawa on April 1 1945 and were hit a couple of hours after it started.

When I saw the Big Lottery Fund was open to those who had served at Okinawa I applied and was successful in obtaining the most generous full grant from Heroes Return 2 for myself and

my daughter Elaine, to accompany me as my carer.

We flew from Heathrow in January to Hong Kong and then on the twice-weekly service to Naha City, the capital city of Okinawa prefecture.

Our prime purpose was to visit the Peace Memorial Park.

The park is situated in the Mabuni area of Itoman City, which is in the south of the island near where the final land battle of Okinawa took place.

The park enjoys a spectacular view of the rugged and beautiful coastline on its south-east border.

The former Ryukyu Government initiated the creation of the park on the site and following Okinawa's reversion to Japan in 1972 full-scale construction of a public park was started.

The park covers some 120 acres and features many facets of the war on Okinawa, including a computerised information centre and museum, the National

War Dead Mausoleum, a Prayer Area, the Peace Memorial Hall, the Flame of Peace and the Cornerstone of Peace.

The Cornerstone of Peace, unveiled in 1995 – 50 years after the end of the fighting – records the names of all of the 240,000 war dead, regardless of nationality or military/civilian affiliation, killed during the 11-week battle.

These names are on monument walls, faced with black marble, spread out in concentric arcs from the Flame of Peace at the centre of the Peace Plaza.

The 117 monument walls are shaped like folding screens with space for 250,000 names.

The names are grouped under either 'Japan' or 'Foreign Countries'.

Our monument wall, in memory of those men from the British Pacific Fleet, is in Row D and in the same row as those of the 14,000 men from the USA.

Those named are in alphabetical

order, with full given names added, and read across the wall.

There is no indication of rank/date of death or that they were even serving in HM Ships, although all the walls in the park are similar with only names thereon.

They were serving on the following ships: Victorious (22), Indefatigable (20), Indomitable (10), Illustrious (9), Ulster (4), Swiftsure (1) and Implacable (1).

The Peace Park, which is beautifully maintained, is a key tourist site, so not only acts as a place of remembrance but also has large grassy areas, away and apart from the memorials, where families can picnic, play ball games and enjoy recreational activities.

By the size of the car park and other facilities I think it must be frequently used, and considering land is at a premium the size of the entire Peace Park is astonishing.

June 23 is Okinawa Memorial Day and each year veterans, bereaved families and other individuals come to participate in a memorial service.

I am not aware that any veterans association from the British Pacific Fleet or other official bodies has ever attended, or been invited.

My thoughts as I stood beside the names were that, although in reality it was nearly 65 years ago it all happened, it could have been yesterday when we were hit.

The images of that morning, perhaps a bit frayed round the edges, are I am sure still with us all who were there.

Elaine and I went alone, and we used the local transport whilst there.

From Naha City to the Peace Park there is a bus service which runs every 20 minutes, but requires a change at Itoman City, from where the bus only runs every hour but does drop you off outside the park.

The journey takes about two hours each way.

We found English is hardly spoken at all outside of the hotel which makes the journey just that little more fascinating!

The HMS Indefatigable Association holds its annual reunion at the Royal Maritime Club in Queen Street, Portsmouth over the weekend of April 9-11.

Warm welcome in Penang

ALSO in response to our coverage of the Singapore ceremony (see above), S/M Alf Lonsdale has been in touch to add the final element of the trip, which took them on to Malaysia.

"We proceeded to Penang and were welcomed by both the Penang State Government and Veterans Association of Penang," said Alf.

"A service was arranged at the Cenotaph, for which the Army provided a guard, buglers and attendants for lowering and raising both national emblems and the White Ensign.

"During the service tribute was paid to the personnel of HM ships Hermes, Cornwall, Dorsetshire, Vampire and Hollyhock, all lost to Japanese attacks at Easter 1942 in that region.

"It was a memorable service, followed by a reception at the Dewan City Council Building."

Aircraft carrier HMS Hermes had been undergoing repairs in Trincomalee, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), but she sailed as word came through of an impending Japanese attack.

Following the raid, on April 9 1942, she was returning to port when she was spotted by an enemy reconnaissance aircraft off Batticaloa, and with no air defence on board she was defenceless as bombers struck at will, sinking her with the loss of more than 300 men.

Escorts HMAS Vampire, a destroyer, and Flower-class corvette Hollyhock, plus two tankers were also sunk.

Cruisers Dorsetshire and Cornwall were sunk off Ceylon during the original Japanese raid with the loss of more than 400 men between them, though hundreds more survived.

Where are you all?

AS reunions go it was bijou – but there are plans for greater things to come.

Four of HMS Ark Royal's RPs 1970 commission got together at the end of last year – they have been trying to find all the seamen POs of 5c2 Mess but have only found a few so far.

Even so, a reunion is a reunion,

and after 37 years there was plenty of lampswinging and laughter.

So, where are you 'Scats' Atkins, Bob Newland, Geoff Hanson, Alec Duncan, Bill March, Phil Phillips, Pete Chapel, Jan Pike, 'Sails' and others – they want another reunion, but with more faces.

Contact Phill Hadfield at Philliprhadfield@talktalk.net

Past meets with present

MEMBERS of the Gosport branch of the Submariners Association paid a visit to HMS Raleigh to see how their modern counterparts are trained.

Five former deeps spent the day at the RN Submarine School, where they looked at the latest technology and training methods, chatting to students about the association and the history of the Submarine Service.

There was a surprise reunion for one veteran when Roy Dixon bumped into POWilly Wilmshurst, an instructor at the school.

The two men served together in the old diesel-electric boat HMS Otter in 1980 – PO Wilmshurst's first trip in a submarine, and Roy Dixon's last.

Les Catlin, vice chairman of the Gosport branch, said: "It was a great privilege and a pleasure for us 'old boys' to be invited to visit the Submarine School and talk to some of the students."

"We hope we were able to give them at least a brief insight into the proud history and traditions of the Service they are joining."

The branch has developed close ties with serving submariners and in particular the Communications branch.

Each year the association presents an award to the Communications branch rating who achieves the best marks on a



● Members of the Submariners Association Gosport branch with Cdr Nick Meredith (front, centre), Officer Commanding the RN Submarine School, and instructional staff

Picture: Dave Sherfield

Leading Hand promotion course.

CPO Sandy Sandbrook, the instructor who organised the visit, said: "I've escorted the winner of the award to the association's annual mess dinner on a number of occasions."

"The first time I attended I learned so much, first and foremost that the camaraderie of the submariner doesn't fade with time – if anything it gets stronger."

"We in the Submarine Service have a number of sayings."

"One is 'look to the future, but remember our past.'"



Gunning for new members

HAVE you ever served in the Naval Gunfire Support world?

Are you a member of the Amphibious Bombardment Association – and if not, the association would like to know why not?

The ABA is about 390 strong and includes current and former members of the NGS world, Army, Navy and Royal Marines, Regular and TA (NGLOs as well as others) and comprises all ranks and rates.

They produce two publications per year, and have periodic reunions, mainly at Poole – the next one is on Saturday June 26 – and also an annual lunch in London for former members of the World War 2 COBUs.

All of which enable them to keep in contact and keep up to date with current events.

It costs nothing, so if you are interested contact either Phil West at philip.west3@btinternet.com or BSM 148 Bty WO2 Richard Bockiek at 3CDOX-29CDO-148BTYBSM@mod.uk

That'll be rolls for lunch, then

YOU may remember some correspondence on our letters pages last October over the presence of bunks and hammocks in HMS Amethyst.

The conclusion from the experts at the Naval Historical Branch was that there were stabilisers, but that the jury was out on hammocks or bunks.

Kenneth Thornton has written to us to affirm that "there were no bunks on the ship – we all used hammocks."

"In our mess there was the Chief ERA, one 3rd and one 4th class ERAs and one Mechanician. "I was a 5th, shortly promoted to Acting 4th ERA."

With regard to the stabilisers, S/M Kenneth wrote: "The stabilisers were controlled by the Chief Stoker and so, as I recall, were not used in heavy seas but on occasion he tested them in the calm to make the ship roll – usually when it was lunchtime..."

Fantastic 50th

CORK and County branch celebrated its 50th anniversary with a dinner held at the Vienna Woods Hotel, Cork.

The event was well-attended, with many distinguished guests from all over Ireland, north and south.

The principal guest was Cllr Brian Bermingham, the immediate past Lord Mayor of the city, who gave an enlightened address worthy of any blue-blooded Royal Naval historian, according to S/M Ivan Hunter, the National Council member for Area 12 (Ireland).

A matter of timing

S/M ALAN Waite has asked us to clarify the timings of donations by the HMS Newfoundland Association, as reported in our March edition.

"The Help for Heroes was initially given, at the final AGM, £1,357 and then £142.35 with the other recipients," said S/M Alan.

£50 PRIZE PUZZLE



THE mystery ship in our February edition (right) was HMS Grafton, now flying the naval ensign of the Armada de Chile as the Almirante Lynch.

Mike Hatton, of Whitstable, Kent, wins £50 for providing the correct answer.

This month's Montrose-built ship (above), was one of three Ton-class ships which engaged with Indonesian sampans off the Malayan coast in March 1965, the others being HM ships Punchedon and Invermoriston.

Four of her ship's company were slightly injured – what was her name?

We have removed her pennant number from the picture.

Complete the coupon and send

MYSTERY PICTURE 182

Name

Address

My answer

Say thanks to friends of Forces

A NATIONAL awards scheme to recognise people who give exceptional support to the British military has been launched by the Royal British Legion.

Prince Harry, a lieutenant with the Household Cavalry and who served in Afghanistan himself, praised the Friends of the Forces Awards, saying: "These awards are an excellent idea, and I am very proud to be involved."

"For those serving in the British Armed Forces, the knowledge that others are thinking of them has a hugely positive effect that cannot be underestimated. "I remember that very acutely."

Winners will be chosen in categories recognising individual, young individual, community group, and commercial organisation contributions.

Winners will be announced in eight regions covering England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and those shortlisted for the national awards will attend a Royal gala ceremony in London in July.

For more information or to apply, visit www.friendsoftheforces.org.uk or contact 0845 363 1478.

JPA update

THE Release 12 update to JPA took place over the weekend of March 13-14 and contained a number of tri-Service requested improvements to processes, updates to tables/lists of values and the introduction to some new processes for admin staff.

One significant change will be the requirement for all personnel to log on to JPA via the JPA Portal page, this is a major source of information for all users of JPA providing access to the self service user guide, the JSPs relating to pay, allowances and leave and the business advice guides (BAG) (ie how to do things on JPA).

A number of sources of information already exist for the self service user whose access to JPA is not as frequent as HR specialists and therefore not as instinctive.

The Self Service User Guide (SSUG) within JPA is available via the Library button at the JPA Portal before you log on or after you have logged can be found on the right-hand side of your JPA Home screen/menu.

The SSUG also now contains a link at each process page to a JPA pocket guide.

This contains (in a business-card-size format which can be printed off to be kept in your wallet) details of how to carry out a number of standard processes.

Additionally the RN JPA Focal Point have also created some beginner's guides to help with basic functions (workflows, absence requests, updating personal information, setting preferences) and an advisory one on I-expenses (which gives a brief introduction to the most common types of allowances that can be claimed).

These are available to all via the Defence Intranet (follow this route to access them: Royal Navy, A-Z page, DNPS Business Information Systems Support site, and then under the Related Documents section a link to BIS Information Guides for Self Service Users).

It's your 2-6

NEED to get your message across to the rest of the Royal Navy?

To feature in the Navy News 2-6 pages contact Lt Cdr Heather Lane or WO1 Baz Cooke (Fleet Media Ops) on 93832 8809 or 93832 8821, email FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC SO2 or FLEET-DCS-INFO-IC WO.

NFF gets to the heart of the matter

THE VIEWS and experiences of Royal Navy and Royal Marines families have never been in such demand; key decision-makers really want to know where to focus their energies to give families the best possible outcomes to the demands of being part of the Senior Service.

The Naval Families Federation is being asked for these comments within many diverse departments and organisations, so please keep your communications flowing.

The Armed Forces Pay Review Body has delivered this year's announcements, and as part of the annual review process the Chairwoman NFF meets the review body to give feedback on their recommendations.

What our Chairwoman, Kim Richardson, needs to know is your opinion on the award and whether it is missing any key considerations to help shape future planning.

■ **Changes to Dependents ID Cards (Form S.1511)**

In line with Government policy, Dependents ID Cards are now required to carry an expiry date.

A rolling process is already in place whereby new/replacement cards will include this information and a target date of November 5 2010 has now been set to complete this work.

Until November 5 cards with or without an expiry date are both valid.

If you require a replacement ID card contact the Unit Personnel Office (UPO).

NB: The expiry date is based on the length of the serving member's draft/appointment, but with a maximum validity of three years from the date of issue.

■ **Voting from Afghanistan**

If you are currently serving or likely to be serving in Afghanistan at the time of the General Election (date to be announced), you will be interested to know that a minister-led Working Group has been established to consider ways of enhancing your ability to participate in the elections.

Members of the Working Group include the Families Federations, MOD officials, Ministry of Justice and Electoral Commission officials.

The main concerns were that postal voting often precludes personnel serving overseas from getting their votes in on time owing to the short (11-day) window to get forms to and from theatre.

Proxy voting is an alternative but is not considered appropriate by some.

The Working Group has therefore been looking at ways of delivering an enhanced service for all personnel deployed to Afghanistan to be able to register and vote in the coming General Election.

The system will use the Air Bridge to get registration and then ballot papers to and from theatre and information about this new process is currently being cascaded via the chain of command in theatre.

We will carry further information on our website as soon as it is available.

It should be stressed that the postal voting process is subject to operational requirements and therefore cannot be guaranteed, however personnel deployed to Afghanistan will still be able to vote by proxy if they wish.

For those reading this in other overseas locations who are still faced with the challenges of the postal system, rest assured we have not forgotten you!

The Working Group is also looking at ways of enhancing your ability to participate in elections but as the options being

considered may involve changes to primary legislation, this will take some time to deliver.

In the interim, people keen to vote in the forthcoming election who fear the postal system may not be fast enough to register their vote are encouraged to consider nominating a proxy to vote on their behalf.

■ **Defence Estates Housing Information Centre**

A new Defence Estates Housing Information Centre (HIC) has opened for business in Plymouth.

All Royal Naval and Royal Marines families either wishing to apply for Service Families Accommodation (SFA), or wishing to retain Service Families Accommodation in the West Country will now need to direct the 1132 applications to:

DE HIC,
106 Hunter Close,
Plymouth,
PL6 5DW,
Fax: 01752 753939,
Telephone: 0800 169 6322.

As a quick guide, if you are applying for SFA in Taunton and west of there, then the Plymouth HIC will be the offices handling the application.

Please note that the HIC does not have a counter service and is not open to visitors.

■ **Service Families Employment & Skills Task Force launches**

Established in late autumn, this Task Force, chaired by both Yvette Cooper and Lord McKenzie on behalf of the Deputy Prime Minister, has met three times to build on work already initiated by the Service Personnel Command Paper to enhance family members' access to training and employment opportunities.

■ **Establishment of Armed Forces Champions in every Job Centre Plus District.**

This was launched in Colchester on March 10 2010. A new information portal to be launched on April 1 2010 via Royal British Legion's 'Civvy Street' site and the DirectGov.com site (linked to Job Centre Plus) to pull together information on training and employment opportunities available for Service family members.

■ A public transport survey aimed at identifying gaps in provision for military communities.

■ A mapping exercise by Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) to identify any gaps in the reach of Children's Centres and Sure Start facilities into military communities.

■ Initiatives by the private sector to tap into the 'talent pool' presented by military family members.

Enterprise are to trial manning an RPC call centre on a military base and also to launch a trial training and work placement programme for military dependants aged 16-plus.

■ Work by Cabinet Office to consider ways of enhancing the prospects of employment transfers for partners already employed as civil servants.

■ Further evaluation of Tax Credits to see if they can be improved to support military



partners who wish to work.

■ **FAB Breaks for Families**

Families' Activity Breaks (FAB) is a charitable initiative that offers adventure holidays to bereaved Service families.

These holidays aim to provide families with the opportunity to enjoy activities, whilst encouraging confidence, friendships and peer support in the aftermath of their loss.

The week-long holidays cost just £50 per family and include a large range of organised activities such as horse riding, abseiling and canoeing.

The holidays are running in various destinations across the UK in July and August 2010.

For further information on the holidays, eligibility and how to apply go to nff.org.uk and follow the links in the 'Family' section.

■ It is the season for Drafty to be working at a frenzied pace. Once you have your assignment order, whether you need to move or retain SFA then please take action.

The amount of moves made over the summer can be helped by planning now, if the allocation team for your area know whether you need to stay or go, they can put it on the plot and open up options for all moving families.

If you have any comment to make then please get in touch.

The NFF can be contacted via: e-mail admin@nff.org.uk, tel: 02392 654374, or write to:

Castaway House,
311 Twyford Avenue,
Portsmouth,
PO2 8RN.

Support in legal actions

A NEW DIN – 2010 DIN01-050 – has been released that talks about the support available for Service personnel who are facing legal proceedings because of actions conducted as a result of their duties, whether in civil or criminal law.

The DIN is particularly focused on cases where an individual, whether a civilian employee or member of the Armed Forces, is alleged to have acted wrongfully in the course of employment leading to death, personal injury or serious damage.

As, unsurprisingly, the issues surrounding this subject are complex, please make finding this DIN your first port of call for information.

Energise with the MOD

IN THE 2008/09 period, the MOD spent £345 million on energy. The MOD Energy Awards have been launched to encourage people to reduce the energy consumption across the MOD.

There are four categories open to all permanent MOD Service and civilian staff:

■ MODenergy manager or energy warden of the year award – to the person for their efforts in bringing in energy efficient practices;

■ MODenergy carbon minimisation award – awarded to the site which has achieved the lowest energy consumption compared to the previous year;

■ MODenergy team award – recognises groups which have come up with innovative energy-saving ideas;

■ MODenergy overseas award – overseas defence estate or operational theatres which have made a substantial impact in minimising energy consumption.

Individuals, projects and teams can be nominated by their line manager, section head, project manager, their stakeholders or customers, or even by themselves. And all nominations have to be endorsed by the Head of Establishment who gains by the initiative.

Nominations, with supporting statement of up to 500 words, should be submitted to energy@de.mod.uk.

Closing date for nominations is June 4 2010, and the period up for consideration stretches from April 2008 to March 2010.

For full details, seek out DIN 2010 DIN04-070.

Be the Boss on civvy street

THIS month sees the launch of the Be the Boss enterprise scheme.

Administered by the Royal British Legion, it will provide former Service personnel with loans of up to £50,000 and grants of up to £7,500 to assist with the costs of starting and growing a business.

Anyone who has left the Service since October 7 2001 will be eligible for the scheme which will deliver up to £5 million in enterprise support for developing businesses.

The scheme builds on the RBL's Civvy Street website service that contains information about resettlement, learning and work for people leaving the British Armed Forces. You are able to register and create a personal Civvy Street.

For further information visit www.civvystreet.org, email betheboss@civvystreet.org or contact the Be the Boss helpline on 0800 678 5787.

where to look

- DIBs**
DIB 17/10: Launch of veterans enterprise scheme
DIB 15/10: Afghanistan: Operation Mosharak update March 10 2010
DIB 14/10: Fairness, Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Service Complaints Process
DIB 13/10: Armed Forces Pay Award 2010
- DINs**
DIN 2010 DIN01-049: Naval Service terms of Service – Changes to premature termination of career training points for RN officers under initial training
DIN 2010 DIN01-048: MOD Armed Forces support to The Prince's Trust team programme: Appeal for short-term volunteer leaders
DIN 2010 DIN01-047: Relocation Allowances – Additional Housing Costs Allowance (AHCA) for renters
DIN 2010 DIN01-046: Control of surveys to Naval Personnel
DIN 2010 DIN01-044: JSP 893 - Policy on safeguarding vulnerable groups
DIN 2010 DIN01-041: Naval Service terms of Service – Issue of BR1066 Change 19 (January 2010) and subsequent notification of amendment to Article 29059
DIN 2010 DIN01-040: British citizenship rules for children of Foreign and Commonwealth citizens born while on overseas postings – notification of Home Office advice
DIN 2010 DIN01-039: Notification of Navy Command Headquarters point of contact for nationality issues relating to Foreign and Commonwealth personnel serving in the RN and RM
DIN 2010 DIN01-031: Adventurous Training
DIN 2010 DIN01-025: Changes to PAX Scheme effective from March 1 2010
DIN 2010 DIN01-024: Royal Navy Fitness Test
DIN 2010 DIN03-004: The Maritime Aviation Support Force (MASF) – Mission and capability statements and revised tasking process
DIN 2010 DIN03-003: The handling of flying complaints from members of the public in the UK
- DIN 2010 DIN05-017:** Fleet Information Management Unit (FIMU) reference information libraries
DIN 2010 DIN05-015: Relocation of the Service Prosecuting Authority
DIN 2010 DIN05-014: Defence Instructions and Notices (DINs) – A guide for readers and writers
DIN 2010 DIN07-029: Training at the Institute of Naval Medicine
DIN 2010 DIN07-025: Airworthiness for Military Aircraft Course (AMAC)
DIN 2010 DIN01-012: Exercise Caribbean Endeavour 2010/2011
- RNTMs**
Issue 03/10 – Nos 048/10: Removal from service of survivors kit – Surfplot units
Issue 03/10 – Nos 049/10: Procedure for personnel requesting transfer to the Medical branch as a Medical Assistant
Issue 03/10 – Nos 050/10: Fire and floods reported in ships, submarines and RFAs - Analysis in 2009
Issue 03/10 – Nos 052/10: High voltage training courses professional body accreditation and introduction of 'AP' Journal
Issue 03/10 – Nos 053/10: Status of recruiting into sideways entry Branches and opportunities for Branch transfer
Issue 03/10 – Nos 054/10: Revised arrangements for submitting S2012 (report of change to ship fit definition) to Master Record Data Centre (Ships)
Issue 02/10 – Nos 032/10: Dependents ID cards (Form S1511) to show expiry date target date November 5 2010
Issue 02/10 – Nos 033/10: 2010 Logistics Matters magazine – submission of articles
Issue 02/10 – Nos 034/10: Bridge training records
Issue 02/10 – Nos 036/10: Direct graduate entry for Medical Services officers as Environmental Health Practitioners
Issue 02/10 – Nos 039/10: Issue of BR1066 change 19 (January 2010) and notification of subsequent amendment to article 29059
Issue 02/10 – Nos 040/10: Incident Board markings for ship protection incidents (Surface Fleet)

How to win with your DIN

IF YOU want to get your words into print, there are a few basic rules to success.

And if you want to get your words into a DIN (Defence Instruction or Notice), there is new guidance to help you get your notice approved and circulated out to the wider military and MOD community.

Seek out DIN 2010 DIN05-014 for the full – and marvellously written – instructions for your successful DIN writing by the professional DIN approvers of Defence Media Communications.

Advice on publishing DINs is broken into seven steps:

1. **Make sure you really want a DIN**
Publishing a DIN is the right choice if you can answer yes to all the following questions: is my information a piece of guidance, an instruction or a notice; is my information new, or does it amend an existing DIN; is my information relevant to UK defence activities; is my information important, official and authoritative; does my information need to be communicated across the MOD or Armed Forces; and does my information need to reach people in weeks, but not days?

It takes around two weeks for a DIN to appear in electronic form, and up to six weeks on paper.

2. **Write your DIN**
There is a template available on the Defence Intranet via the IC Hub homepage.

This template provides styles – A4, black and white, Arial 12pt font – and information on header summaries, annex styles, and how to conform to defence-wide guidelines, and be channelled through the appropriate moderator.

As a source of relief to us here at *Navy News* and possibly the wider Naval community, there is guidance that a DIN should be no more than 20 pages in length...

3. **Decide into which channel your DIN falls**

The channels help readers know where to look. The options are: 01 Personnel; 02 Security and intelligence; 03 Defence policy and operations; 04 Defence equipment and support and the Defence Estate; 05 Defence management, organisation and business practice; 06 Safety, health, environment, fire; 07 Training and education; 08 Finance, accounting

and budgeting; 09 Honours, awards, royal and ceremonial events; 10 Sports and social events.

4. **Fill in the DIN header information summary table**

Use the template and make it easier for your DIN to be filed, published and indexed in the right places.

It's important to get this bit right, or your DIN will not be seen by the people who need to see it.

5. **Choose the correct DIN moderator**
Before it can be published, your DIN must be cleared by a moderator – the full list can be found at Annex C of DIN 2010 DIN05-014.

6. **Send the moderator your completed DIN**

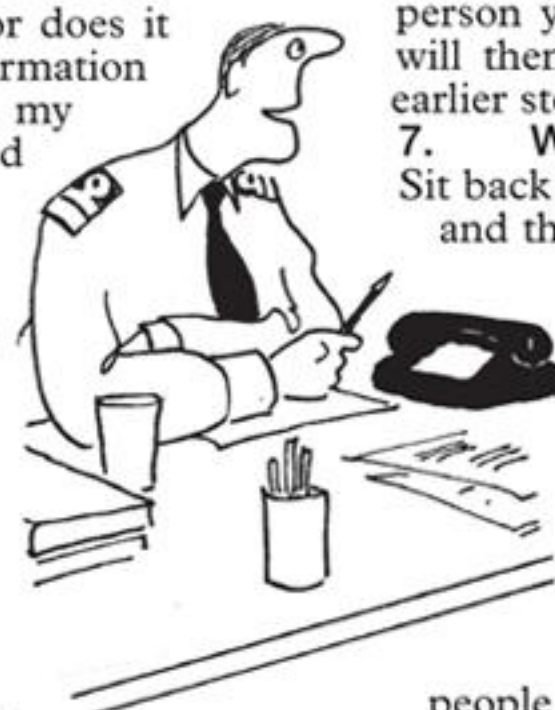
Send it as a Word document attachment to the person you've already identified in Step 5. They will then make sure that you have followed the earlier steps correctly.

7. **Wait for your DIN to be published**
Sit back and keep an eye on the Defence Intranet and the DIN Digest to see your words in print.

The Annexes at the back of the DIN-writing DIN also include a useful set of tips for successful writing. In brief, these involve:

- be clear about what you are trying to communicate;
- think of your readers and how they will react, if they will be familiar with the subject;
- target your draft closely to the people who need to read it, otherwise you're wasting their time and yours;
- avoid modish words or phrases, words such as 'synergy' and 'benchmarking', and scientific or technical terms such as 'critical mass' and 'quantum leap' are often misused or misunderstood (*heartfelt support for this plea – 2-6 Ed*);
- avoid using acronyms and abbreviations, or where used, spell them out fully the first time; always explain any technical terms;
- consider using an annex for detailed information, keeping the main document concise;
- list references under the subject heading at the top of the text and avoid cluttering the main text with footnotes unless absolutely necessary.

So there you go – if you have something to say and it's worth saying across defence, some simple steps to success.



Pay changes at a glance

FOLLOWING the recommendations of the independent Armed Forces' Pay Review Body, there is a pay rise of 2 per cent in Armed Forces pay from the start of this month.

Other changes include:

- the extension of provisions, which allow those serving on certain seagoing vessels to receive Longer Separation Allowance (LSA), to include all Service personnel operating under similar arrangements under field and shipboard conditions;
- a reduction of the LSA

minimum threshold from ten to seven days continuous separation;

- the extension of Unpleasant Living Allowance to cover Service personnel living and operating from Forward Operating Bases and Patrol Bases in Afghanistan.

The AFPRB announcement increases basic military salary for all Service personnel including Reserves. It does not include Service medical and dental officers, and senior officers above the rank of Commodore, whose salaries are the subject of separate Review Bodies.

Royal Navy	Royal Marine	Previous	From April 1 2010
Commodore	Brigadier	£95,128-98,984	£97,030-100,964
Captain	Colonel	£79,716-87,655	£81,310-89,408
Commander	Lieutenant Colonel	£65,717-76,095	£67,032-77,617
Lieutenant Commander	Major	£46,824-56,078	£47,760-57,199
Lieutenant	Captain	£37,172-44,206	£37,916-45,090
New entrant officers	New entrant officers	£15,268-32,062	£15,573-32,703
Warrant Officer 1	Warrant Officer 1	£37,843-45,836	£38,600-46,753
Warrant Officer 2	Warrant Officer 2	£35,342-42,404	£36,049-43,252
Chief Petty Officer (non-Artificer)		£32,575-42,404	£33,223-43,252
Chief Petty Officer (Artificer)	Colour Sergeant	£32,575-41,219	£33,223-42,044
Petty Officer	Sergeant	£29,424-36,205	£30,013-36,929
Leading Rate	Corporal	£25,887-32,532	£26,405-33,182
	Lance Corporal	£20,178-28,372	£20,582-28,940
Able Rate	Marine	£16,681-28,372	£17,015-28,940

■ Refer to DIB 13/10 for incremental details.

Public replies to the SPCP

THE public consultation into the Service Personnel Command Paper closed in October 2009 and the responses have been analysed in the Summary of Responses.

Among the common themes identified were:

- an Armed Forces Charter and improved use of the ombudsman service;
- improving awareness of the issues faced by the military and improving communication between the Service community and service providers would help address shortfalls;
- there was a view that the existing routes to recourse needed little change and the introduction of new measures risked duplication and confusion;
- the military community was keen for a legal duty on public bodies to ensure consistent levels of service across the UK; whereas local governments highlighted the potential burden on resources of a legal duty;
- respondents, including local authorities, said it was difficult to identify the Armed Forces community and ensure that people received the required standard of service;
- this further led to a need for a formal definition of the Armed Forces community including veterans.

The work is ongoing with regards to the Service Personnel Command Paper which contained 47 commitments on a range of welfare issues.

Any questions on the Service Personnel Command Paper, The Nation's Commitment, can be directed to: DCDSPERS-SEC-SPCPMAILBOX@mod.uk; or in writing to:

SPCP Team
MOD Level 7, Zone J,
MOD Main Building
Whitehall
London SW1A 2HB

Watch out for the new Two-Six.tv DVD

LOOK out for the latest edition of *Two-Six.tv* DVD.

This is the Royal Navy's internal communication video for serving personnel and their families.

It has been revitalised with a new look and feel and is now fully interactive by being available for viewing on the RNcom.mod.uk website.

Every ship, unit and establishment will receive a copy of the DVD which is distributed quarterly.

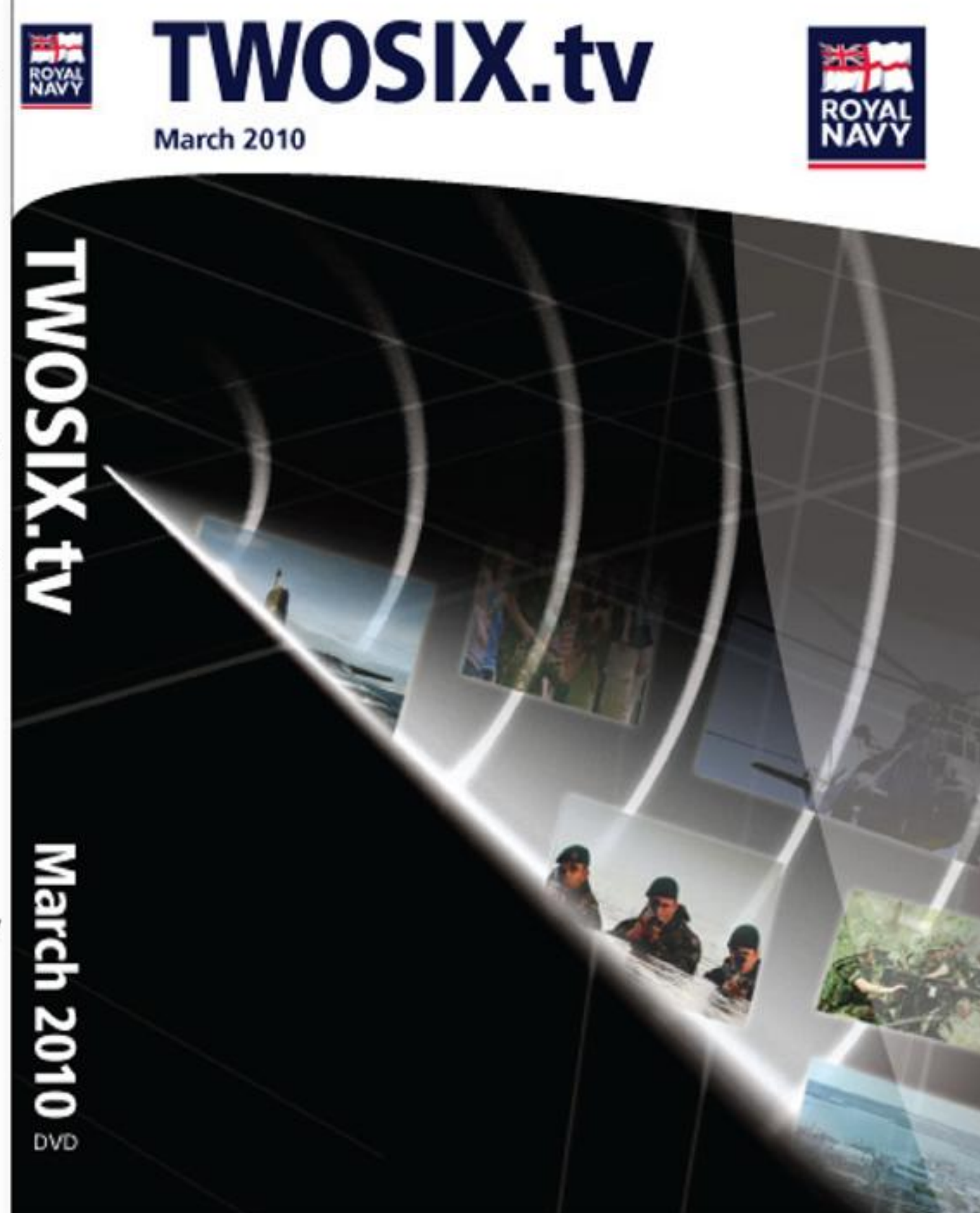
It is an integral part of a unit's divisional meeting and contains the latest PSB (Personnel Support Brief).

The latest subjects *Two-Six.tv* will cover:

- A personal message from the First Sea Lord
- 40 CDO RM pre-deployment training
- Life on board a submarine
- RFA/RM interaction featuring RFA Mounts Bay
- Link from Haiti featuring RFA Largs Bay

The team at *Two-Six.tv* invite constructive feedback or ideas for future editions.

For further information contact: WO1 Barrie Cooke or email: barrie.cooke731@mod.uk



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NOTICEBOARD

THE TIME OF YOUR LIVES

We flick back through the pages of Navy News to see which stories were drawing attention in past decades...

April 1970

NO FEWER than eight British ships were visiting Australia in what Navy News dubbed a 'Cook's tour,' to bring RN presence to the bi-centennial celebrations of Capt Cook claiming the east coast as British territory in 1770.

The helicopter cruiser HMS Blake was to be the flagship of a group commanded by Rear Admiral Terence Lewin, second-in-command of the Far East Fleet.

HMS Blake was joined by Plymouth, Nubian, Euryalus, Andromeda and Whitby, and the RFAs Tidesurge and Stromness, which among them had a programme to cover as much of the country as possible.

The Royal Navy's presence at the multi-million dollar celebrations would add much to the spirit of Capt Cook's bi-centenary celebrations, said the Australian Rear-Admiral in charge of the festivities.

April 1980

THE Fleet Air Arm museum in Yeovilton launched the Mountbatten Memorial Hall appeal to pay off the money outstanding on its ambitious building project.

Three new halls had been built over the previous five years, to provide an extra 60,000 square feet of exhibition area. They were due to open to the public at Easter.

About £220,000 was still outstanding, and the museum hoped to raise it quickly as interest rates were particularly high.

Petrol shortages the previous summer had seen visitor numbers drop, but the museum was still attracting more than a quarter of a million visitors a year.

New displays were planned to follow the Five Ark Royals, First Deck Landing, Warneford VC and other attractions.

The latest acquisition was a replica 1923 Fairey Flycatcher fighter.

April 1990

HMS Manchester was doing her bit to research global warming with a visit to the beautiful but low-lying Maldives Archipelago off the south-west tip of India.

The tiny, lush green islands – which number some 1,190 in a double chain of 26 atolls – on a coral reef were already a magnet for well-heeled tourists, but standing only six feet above the surface of the ocean, they were all under threat of extinction from rising sea levels.

The Maldives are distinctive as the lowest country on the planet, and their highest peak – or perhaps gentle curve – stands at seven feet seven inches above sea level.

Manchester's Lynx helicopter was able to help British scientists research the islands by photographing some of the lagoon reefs during an aerial reconnaissance of North and South Malé Atoll.

Operational honours

Operational honours which recognise service on operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and national operations for the period April 1 to September 30 2009:

AFGHANISTAN
Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)
Brigadier David Arthur Hook, Royal Marines
Military Cross (MC)
Warrant Officer Class 2

Mathew Robert Tomlinson, CGC, Royal Marines
Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)
Surgeon Commander Sarah Ann Stapley, Royal Navy

IRAQ
Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE)
Commander James Robert Dean, Royal Navy
Queen's Commendation for Valuable Service (QCVS)

Commander Henry Alworth Hamilton Merewether, Royal Navy; Brigadier Rupert Paul Stearns, Royal Marines

REST OF THE WORLD
Queen's Commendation for Bravery (QCB)

Petty Officer Richard Griffiths Hicks, Royal Navy; Petty Officer Air Engineering Technician Alan Murphy, Royal Navy; Leading Seaman Carl Thomas, Royal Navy

Reunions

MARCH

20(R) Squadron: The members of 20(R) Squadron wish to extend an invitation to all ex-members and affiliates, along with their partners, to the occasion of the disbandment of 20(R) Squadron taking place on March 31. The day will commence with a parade at RAF Cottesmore followed by an open afternoon on the Squadron followed by the laying-up of the Squadron Standard and culminating in a black-tie evening event at the Officers Mess, RAF Wittering. For details please contact Lt Steve McKean RN at wit20sqn-opsstudent22@witting.raf.mod.uk or tel: civ 01780 783838 ext 7404 or Mil: 95351ext 7404.

APRIL

Captain Class Frigate Association: Reunion at the Warwick Hilton on April 17. Contact Don Hitchcock on 01676 534719. Hotel is 01926 499555.

MAY

HMS Concord Association: Hold their final reunion from May 14 to 16 in Portsmouth, when they will also commemorate the launching of the ship on May 14, 1945. Details from Peter Lee-Hale, 53 Shelburne Road, Calne, Wiltshire, SN11 8ET.

Orkney Royal Naval Association: The Orkney Branch of the RNA will be holding their dedication and blessing of their new Standard. All those wishing to come will be most welcome. There is a trip to Lyness Naval Museum and Cemetery on 21 and Buffet/Dance on May 22. Further details from David Young at david@kilgower50.plus.com or tel: 07720 254791.

JUNE

The HMS Intrepid Association: Reunion weekend: June 11 – San Carlos Hilton play, Shrewsbury; June 12 – AGM/reunion dinner, Nautical Club, Birmingham; June 13 – visit National Arboretum. Bookings/further information at www.hmsintrepid.co.uk or tel: 01344 451487, or email members@hmsintrepid.co.uk.

HMS Nubian Association 1964-66 Commission: Annual reunion will be held at the Carlton Hotel, Great Yarmouth from June 11 to 12. For further details contact Jim Rotherham on 01246 433923 or book direct with the hotel on 01493 855234.

Royal Naval Engineer Association: 17th annual reunion on June 25-26 at the Nautical Club, Birmingham. Details from Bob Styants at bobstyants@btinternet.com or tel: 0121 422 4115.

523 & 524 Recruit Squads, Royal Marines: Hold their 13th reunion on June 26 at the Royal Maritime Club, Queen Street, Portsmouth. Contact Don Pimp, 92 Pound Road, East Peckham, Tonbridge, Kent. TN12 5BJ or tel: 01622 871573.

JULY

HMS Hood, Neptune and Kandahar: There will be a joint Hood Association and Neptune Association service to re-dedicate both Hood and Neptune memorials at the National Memorial Arboretum at Alrewas, Burton-on-Trent, Staffordshire DE13 7AR on July 9 at noon. The Hood Memorial was erected in October 2008 in honour of the 1415 men who lost their lives on May 24 1941. The Neptune Memorial was erected in July 2005 in honour of the 837 men who lost their lives on the two ships HMS Neptune

and HMS Kandahar on December 19 1941. Relatives and friends are welcome. HMS Hood website at <http://www.hmshood.com> and HMS Neptune website at <http://www.hmsneptune.com>.

Serving and Ex Communications Warrant Officers: Reunion and dinner dance on July 30 at the WO/SR Mess, HMS Collingwood. Please get in touch for details, Paul Saynor: saynorp@hotmail.com or 023 9279 9713, George Foster: the.bunting@ntlworld.com or 023 9279 7753, Dave Turner: buntstwo@ntlworld.com or 01329 310835, Ian Storton Smith: sparker.1@btinternet.com or 023 9258 8328. Application and details via <http://www.wocommsdinner.com>.

AUGUST

HMS Orion Association: Annual reunion at the Royal Fleet Hotel, Devonport, Plymouth on August 21 and 22. Contact Kay West for more details at kay.west@tiscali.co.uk or tel: 0116 259 2171.

SEPTEMBER

Polaris Submarine HMS Repulse Reunion: This event will take place in The King Charles Hotel Gillingham from September 17 to 19. Information available at <http://www.hms-repulse.co.uk> or contact Frank Scutt on 01480 393228 or write to 4 Avon Court, Eaton Socon, St Neots, PE19 8HX.

Royal Navy Boom Defence Ratings: The next Boomers convention will be held in Scarborough from September 17 to 19. For details contact Alf Mumberson on 01302 811898 or Lance Hollingsworth on 01723 369798.

Lascaris (Malta) Association: Reunion at the Britannia Hotel, Newcastle upon Tyne from September 27 to October 1. Contact the secretary, Pat Middleton at rmh50@hotmail.com or tel: 01858 445827 for more details.

OCTOBER

Aircraft Mechanicians Course M75 1M: At HMS Daedalus, Lee on Solent, 1975-76. Trying to contact all class members for a potential reunion in October this year. Date and venue to be decided. Plan to include wives/partners. We did have some good times. Look forward to hearing from you all. Please contact philhillson@hotmail.com or write to 10 Cintra Place, Casebrook, Christchurch, B051, New Zealand for more details.

HMS Caprice (1968) Association: Reunion at the Heights Hotel, Portland on October 1-2. If you were aboard HMS Caprice during her memorable world cruise in 1968, and are not already a member of our 83-strong association, why not join us? Meet some of your old shipmates. Contact Graham Litter at g@litter.karoo.co.uk or see the website: <http://www.hmscaprice1968.org.uk> or tel: 01482 632276.

HMS Eskimo, 1966-68 Commission: The 10th annual reunion will be held at the Bancourt Hotel, Torquay, from October 1 to 4. Over the last ten years we have contacted around 130 of the ship's company, and would love to find and meet other shipmates to reminisce and enjoy ourselves with our old shipmates. So please come along, it will be great to meet you again after all these years. You and your wives/partners will be made very welcome, and will have a great time. Contact Allan 'Taff' Martin

at clearwaterbrook4@aol.com or tel: 01823 665439.

HMS Exmouth 1968-71: The next reunion will be held at the Liner Hotel, Liverpool, on October 1 and 2. Anyone wishing to attend or requiring further information should contact Mickey Dunne at michael.dunne7@ntlworld.com or tel: 01325 258193.

HMS Tiger Association (C20): Reunion will take place at the Royal Hotel, Great Yarmouth from October 1 to 4. Further information can be obtained from D Andrews on 01262 670860.

Nore Command RN PTI Branch Association: Annual luncheon takes place at the King Charles Hotel, Gillingham, Kent on October 3. All are welcome. Details from Orlando Jemmett on 01227 263691.

HMS Tartar Association: Hold their seventh reunion, AGM and dinner at the Balmoral Hotel, Bournemouth, from October 15 to 18. Come and join us for a fantastic weekend, with great food and entertainment. All old and new shipmates very welcome. For further details please contact the social secretary at k.hellivell@hotmail.co.uk or tel: 07902 716011.

The Survey Ship Association: Hold their sixteenth reunion at the Celtic Royal Hotel, Caernarfon from October 29 to November 1. For further information send a stamped addressed envelope to: The Secretary SSA, 8 Grosvenor Court, 74 East Lodge Park, Farlington, Portsmouth, PO6 1BY or e-mail: secretary@surveyships.org.uk or telephone 023 9279 1258.

NOVEMBER
HMS Eagle, Last Commission 1969-72: Friends of HMS Eagle are holding a Nautical Experience weekend reunion at the very nautical, Liner Hotel, Lord Nelson Street, Liverpool, from November 5 to 7. After the very successful last three reunions around the country, all Eaglets plus wives/partners and guests are very welcome to re-enact the 'Liverpool visits'. Meet and greet on the Friday evening in the Pacific Lounge. On Saturday there is a choice of visits, followed in the evening by a very nautical dinner, dance and entertainment including local Sea Cadet and Royal Marine involvement with ceremonial sunset and up spirits. (All commissions 1952-72 very welcome.) Hotel accommodation at very good rates. For details contact main organisers Bill Melvin (ex-LPTI), email: bill.melvin@virgin.net or tel: 07740 439987 or write to 4 Middleton Crescent, Bridge of Don, Aberdeen, AB22 8HY or Danny du Feu (ex-L/SeaBoats) email: danny@ddf-photography.co.uk or tel: 07891 660715. See you there!

JANUARY 2011
HMS Battleaxe (D118): January 2011 will be the 50th anniversary of the last commission. Are there any members of the ship's company interested in a reunion in Portsmouth. Contact Lofty Powers at pollard01@tesco.net or tel: 01635 254154.

SEPTEMBER 2011
HMS Churchill: Seventh reunion dinner dance takes place on September 24 at the Queens Hotel, Chester. The fee is £40 per person and rooms can be booked direct. For more details contact Andrew Broadbelt at andybroadbelt@talktalk.net or visit our website at <http://www.hmschurchill.co.uk>



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Deaths

Mr R Spencer and extended family and friends would like to thank all those of the Naval service who attended, helped and organised the funeral and interment of his son PO Andrew 'Frank' Spencer who was killed after a tragic accident returning from Northwood on January 16. Andrew's father would like everyone to know that the sympathy and consideration shown by all concerned was exemplary and made them all feel very proud on that sad day.

PO Andrew 'Frank' Spencer. Joined the Royal Navy in 1988. After submarine basic training at Dolphin he served in Sceptre, Dolphin Submarine School, Sovereign, Trafalgar, Torbay and PJHQ Northwood. Killed in road traffic accident on January 16. Aged 38.

Vice-Admiral Sir Philip Watson, LVO. As an electrical sub-lieutenant in the RNR during the war he served in Hebe escorting convoys to Russia. He later served in the battleship Nelson and Berwick in which he witnessed the German surrender at Trondheim, Norway. After the war he transferred to the Royal Navy and served as electrical officer in two battle class destroyers and Decoy. Promoted to commander in 1955 he was the electrical officer in HMV Britannia then 1961 served in Lion. Promoted to captain he served in the ship design department at Bath rising to deputy director of electrical engineering. He commanded the electrical school MS Collingwood 1967-69 and was Director General Weapons (Naval) 1970-77; promoted to vice-admiral in 1974. December 8. Aged 90.

Surg Capt John Ferguson Smith. Served 1944-47 in Garth and Bicester, 21st Destroyer Flotilla Sheerness. Thereafter served RNR/RNR Clyde Division; being appointed Queen's Honorary Physician. February 12. Aged 87.

Capt Val Bailey. Entered Dartmouth 1933 where he won colours for rugby and trained in Froisher. He served in Resolution during the Spanish Civil War, where as a midshipman he was given command of a motorboat to rescue British civilians from Bilbao and Santander; then in Neptune on the South Africa station before returning to London for his sub-lieutenant courses. After the outbreak of war he was appointed to Active at Gibraltar and took part in East Coast convoys before learning to fly in Tiger Moths at RAF Eldon, Birmingham. He flew a variety of aircraft including the Hurricane before joining Ark Royal where he was the last man off when she was sunk by a torpedo in 1941. In 1942 whilst attached to 273 Sqn in Ceylon, British vessels were coming under increasing attack from the Japanese; his squadron was scrambled. Hermes and her escorts were sunk and many British aircraft were lost, but the determined flight by Bailey and his comrades brought to a halt Japanese expansion. By 1944 he was in command of the Seafires of 886 NAS, providing offensive sweeps and bombardment spotting on D-Day. On June 6 he flew three sorties but the next day he was shot down by his own side, landed in a minefield and was briefly taken captive. In his flying career he flew 49 types of aircraft and made 273 deck landings. Later he became naval attaché in Buenos Aires and Commodore at Drake, Plymouth. January 13. Aged 90.

Lt 'Bubs' Russell. Joined the RN 1939 and spent the early years of the war in HMS Largs taking part in the Allied landings in North Africa and Sicily. Later he led port clearance (P-party) searching for mines and booby traps up the coast of northern Europe including Antwerp, Cherbourg, Ostend, Hamburg and Bremen, living and working in dockside warehouses and outbuildings, drawing naval rations and foraging for food. Often his party advanced close behind the leading troops and occasionally he carried on his work while the Germans counter-attacked. He was awarded a military MBE. December 8. Aged 89.

William K 'Bill' Jones. WO1 MEMN. Served 1961-89 in Cassandra, Defender, Fearless, Churchill, Dreadnought and Swiftsure. Employed as a Sea Rider for Flag Officer Submarines and as Assistant Marine Engineer Officer (M) to Captain SM2. February 8. Aged 64.

Alan William Potter. Chief ERA. Served 1946-68. Joined Figsard as an Artificer Apprentice then Loch Quoich (Indian Ocean). Became a submariner 1953 and served submarines Tresspasser and Seneschal then joined the nuclear submarine Dreadnought in 1960 leading up to the commissioning in 1963. An Instructor at Dounreay and Sultan; completing his career in Glamorgan (1967-

68). February 7. Aged 79.

Tom Borton. Served 1942-46 at Ganges and on Arctic convoys in Boadicea, Hotspur and Rowley. February 9. Aged 85.

Paul Flaherty. EM. Served in Loch Fada and a member of the association; also Raleigh, Collingwood, Adamant, Rapid, Vernon and Juno. February 17.

Brian 'Soapy' Hodson. CA 1st class AH(ATC). Served 1952-74 in Daedalus, Gamecock, Siskin, Eagle, Peregrine, Ark Royal, Heron, Sea Hawk, Fulmar, 809 NAS and NAIC Pinner. Joined HM Coastguard serving 1974-94. Aircraft Handlers Association. January 10. Aged 75.

Andrew 'Andy' Hogg. WO(CK). Served 1947-86 at Raleigh, Dryad, St Vincent, Royal Arthur, Collingwood, and Mercury; also Indomitable, Agincourt, Adamant, Bulwark, Loch Alvie, Lion, Glamorgan, Belfast, London, Blake, Hermes and Invincible. He was resident barber on most of these ships and using funds raised from this 'evening work' he supported various naval charities particularly TS Hermes (Sea Cadets) and in 1979 received the MBE for his charitable work. In 1959 he and his wife established a Sunday school for up to 120 children weekly for 20 years on the Tipner Naval Estate in Portsmouth working with the Royal Sailors Rest Mission; member of the Naval Christian Fellowship. February 5. Aged 80.

Tom McKendrick. L/Stoker. Served 1944-46 in Loch Fada and a member of the association. February 24. Aged 86.

Michael 'Mick' James Elwin. CPOWEA. Served 1963-87 in Figsard, Collingwood, Murray, Dolphin, Excellent, Yarmouth, Royal Arthur, Valiant, Vernon, Shoulton, Kirkliston and Wilton. March 2. Aged 63.

Rodney 'Jan' 'Scribes' Pellew. CPO Writer. Served 1955-77 in Drake, Tamar, Venus, Centaur, Victorious, Terror, Pembroke (Instructor) and Minerva. Selected on several occasions to play cricket for the Royal Navy. February 5. Aged 73.

Derek 'Cats' Cattaneo. Able seaman. Served 1955-66 in Newfoundland, Cumberland, Dryad, Centaur, Hermes, Battleaxe, Diana, Vanguard, Pellew and Tiger. Newfoundland Association; and Centaur Association. March 2. Aged 70.

Stanley Winston Rose. RM. Served 1940-53 in Cleopatra (1941-43), Euryalus (1944-47) and 42 Commando (1951-53). December 27. Aged 86.

Colin 'Ducky' Duckworth. CRS. Served 1952-76 in Cavalier, Solebay and Loch Inch. HMS Solebay Association; and the RN Communicators Association. February 28. Aged 73.

Anthony 'Tony' Wilkes. Diver 1st Class. February 28. Aged 71.

William J N 'Bill' Dobson. Chief ERA. Served 1929-45 as an apprentice at Figsard then Valiant, Ramillies and Fleetwood. Joined submarine service 1940 and served in submarines Tigris, Tribune and Unrivalled. February 28. Aged 95.

Eugene McCarthy. Fleet Chief Radio Supervisor. Served 1949-79 as a Boy Seaman at Ganges aged 15 trained as a telegraphist then Illustrious, Flint Castle, Daring, Cook, Ocean, Vigilant, Phoebe and Ark Royal; also Tamar (Hong Kong), Mercury, Goldcrest, Phoenix (Malta) and Naval HQ Northwood. HMS Daring Association (first commission 52-54). March 8. Aged 76.

Keith Davy. Joined 1946 for National Service, completed Midshipman training at Greenwich College and joined staff of King George VI serving onboard Vanguard then Implacable and Ceres. HMS Implacable and Ceres Associations. December 11. Aged 80.

ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION
Alan Stretton. Served in Bugloss, Fleming and Victorious. Wigston & District RNA. February 11.

Denis Tite. Served in Pembroke, Victory, Europa RNPS, Marshall Sout, Sir William Hillary, FMB 39465, Lanka, Mayina, Golden Hind (via Tyne), Wooloomooloo TRV421136. Wigston & District branch. February 17.

John Cotton. LEM. Served 1953-65 in Ark Royal, Triumph and Decoy. D-boats Association, HMS Triumph Association and Derby RNA. January. Aged 74.

Thomas 'Tom' Gornall. Asdics branch - Motor Launches. Served 1941-46 in Antrim and Christopher, also bases Attack, Hornet, Odyssey, Wildfire and Edinburgh Castle. Life member and treasurer of Bourne RNA.

Connie Bates. WRNS. Trained at Royal Arthur (Bulins Skegness). Life member of the association and for many years served as minute secretary to Bourne Branch. Aged 84.

Frank Burton. Served 1939-46 and rejoined 1947-62. Served Brilliant, Ajax, Llandaff, Wakeful, Belfast, Sussex, Sirius, Dido, Jasper, Superb, Alamein, Victory, Pembroke and Excellent. Life member, chairman and standard bearer Finsbury RNA, also Southend branch. January. Aged 90.

Roy Sidney Huckle. Steward. Served 1943-46 Royal Arthur, Europa, Ashwane, Lucifer, Miranda, Pembroke, Fortitude and Boscowen. Nuneaton branch. January 12. Aged 84.

Joan Ann Cox. Associate member Nuneaton branch. February 13. Aged 77.

Noel 'Spud' Abbott RM 1st class. Served 1955-62 in Malta, Cyprus, Port Said and in Bulwark. Maldon RNA. January 29. Aged 72.

Sydney Dobson. AB. Joined 1941 at 17. Served on MGBs in Coastal Forces 1941-43. Seconded to South African Navy for a period before joining the submarine service in the Far East. Served Collingwood and the Admiralty. Founder member and chairman of Swaffham RNA. December 23. Aged 84.

Arthur Reg Martin. AB. Served 1942-46 in Ulster, Monarch, Wyvern and Abercrombie. Life member and membership secretary for Thurrock RNA. February 9. Aged 86.

William Bernard 'Mitch' Mitchell. Naval Airman. Served 1949-56. Moraira & District branch, Spain. February 26. Aged 75.

Charles 'George' Dwen. L/SBA. Served (HO) 1944-47. Moraira & District branch, Spain. March 5. Aged 84.

Percy Newell. AB Seaman 1st Class Torpedo Man. Served 1943-46. Trained at Ganges then joined Caprice escorting merchant convoys to Russia and regular U-boat hunts; after the Japanese surrender and a quick refit he headed East. A founder member of Pershore & District RNA. February 10. Aged 86.

Donald Herbert Gribble. PO ERA. Served MTBs and mine sweepers also in Rowena in Malta and the Palestine run. Gloucester branch. February 26. Aged 80.

George Washington. Served in Victorious, Penn and Sussex. Wolverhampton RNA. January 9. Aged 88.

Geoff Woodward. Served RN Patrol Service. Wolverhampton branch. January 11. Aged 83.

Roger Foster. Torpedoman. Served as a submariner in Tresspasser, Springer, Grampus, Ambush and Finwhale. Maidstone RNA and the Submariners Association. February 20. Aged 74.

SUBMARINERS ASSOCIATION
Peter 'Pete' Clisby. CPO. Served in submarines 1967-75 aboard Artful, Tiptoe, Orpheus and Andrew. January 27. Aged 62. Essex branch.

Capt J A 'Jim' Barwood. Submarine service in Solent, XE12, Sidon and Sceneshal. Bath branch. Aged 82.

L 'Les' Canning. AB SDR. Submarine service 1943-46 in Tally-Ho. Hull branch. Aged 84.

P G 'Paul' Hammond. AB ST. Submarine service 1945-46 in Thule. Brierley Hill branch. Aged 86.

Lt R 'Roy' Weston. Submarine service 1942-46 in H14, P556, FS Junon, Tribune and Spitful. Australia branch. Aged 89.

LST & LANDING CRAFT ASSOCIATION
M R Heath. Served LC(L)50 and LCT 7044. July 19.

H R Whitting. Served with LCA Flotilla 524 and LSI(L) Empire, Arquebus. December 11.

S A Dennison. Served LCMs and LCAs. January 14.

R W Wootton. Served LST 4. January 29.

ALGERINES ASSOCIATION
Charles Davies. Tel. Served in Mariner. December 7. Aged 80.

Ron Wootton. Steward. Served in Stormcloud. January 29. Aged 85.

Albert Langley. AB. Served in Jewel. February 27. Aged 85.

Josef Laschunja. PO (Belgian navy). Served Georges Leconte (ex-HMS Cadmus). March 5.

William H Hudson. AB. Served in Espiegle. March 6. Aged 85.

February 13: £5,000 - Lt Cdr S P McCleary; £1,500 - Lt Cdr J R Wilkinson; £500 - Lt E J Gaines.

February 20: £5,000 - CPO G G Connolly; £1,500 - CPO P Delaney; £500 - AB I J Robinson.

February 27: £5,000 - Logs L Roberts; £1,500 - Lt L D Platt; £500 - Mne S M Jones.

March 6: £5,000 - CPO M Bradbury; £1,500 - PO M J Chard; £500 - OM(MW)2 W Miller.

March 13: £5,000 - PO WEM(O) S B Leaver; £1,500 - CPO Wtr I R Wilson; £500 - NA AH J A Card.

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Trophy P8926 is a 16-inch tall two-handled silver cup which was originally presented to the battleship HMS Anson by Lady Pound when she launched the ship on February 24 1940.

Just over four years later on April 3 1944, Anson was Vice Admiral Sir Henry Moore's flagship, leading a large force on Operation Tungsten, a concerted Fleet Air Arm attack on the German battleship Tirpitz in Altenfjord, Norway.

Six British aircraft carriers Emperor, Fencer, Furious, Pursuer, Searcher and Victorious took part in the raid and between them deployed a total of 15 fighter, bomber and torpedo-bomber squadrons.

The covering force included, in addition to Anson, four cruisers and 11 destroyers - two of the latter being from the Royal Canadian Navy.

The Admiralty had calculated that the damage caused to Tirpitz in the midjet submarine attack in the previous September had almost certainly been repaired and the first air attack started at 0529 on April 3, by chance just as Tirpitz was preparing

Trophy lives



to sail on sea trials.

This raid was carried out by Barracuda torpedo-bombers, Wildcat and Hellcat fighters strafing the enemy's decks and Corsair fighters providing high-level protection against the expected Luftwaffe response which never occurred.

The Germans were unaware of the incoming raid and did not open fire with anti-aircraft

guns until the first attack was under way.

The next raid also used Barracuda, Wildcat, Hellcat and Corsair aircraft and took place an hour later, by which time a smoke screen had been laid; overall the Tirpitz was hit by four 1,600lb bombs and ten 500lb.

There were 438 casualties and the ship was to be out of action for a further three months; British casualties were minimal, two Barracudas were shot down, a damaged Hellcat had to be ditched and only nine aircrew were killed.

While Tirpitz was seriously damaged the air attacks were mounted with such determination that many bombs were dropped too low to pierce the ship's armour and cause even greater damage.

Several further attacks were mounted on Tirpitz by the Fleet Air Arm in the ensuing months; she was finally sunk by Royal Air Force Lancaster bombers of 9 and 617 Squadrons (the Dambusters) on November 12 1944.

Ask Jack

HMS Norfolk, 1941-45: Seeking any information and/or photographs of Arthur George Tombs who served in HMS Norfolk from 1941 to 1945. Sadly he died in 1983 and his son has no photographs of his father. If you can help with photographs or information please contact Mrs S E Tombs, 7 Badger Close, Spondon, Derby, DE21 7TB.

Jupiter Point: Mr M P Cocker, ex RNKS, is seeking photographs of up to five different views of the steel pontoon jetty at Jupiter Point, HMS Raleigh, taken at low-water mark of spring tide, for personal use. Postage will be reimbursed. Please write to 10 Ellerbeck Road, Cleveleys, Lancashire, FY5 1DH.

HMS Warspite: Allan is seeking information regarding a candlestick, found on a stall in Costa Blanca. The base has a brass plate with the words 'From the Teak of HMS Warspite'. Can anyone throw any light (sorry) on it? Contact Allan Cooper on 01725 517624.

HMS St Vincent 1952-53: Dusty is writing the memoir of his Naval career, but he is not sure of the name of the New Entry division at HMS St Vincent at the time he was there. He thinks the names of the four main divisions were Blake, Duncan, Anson and Hawke? He was in Blake 167 and believes the other two classes of their entry was Duncan 38 and Anson 39. Please correct him if he is wrong. He would like to hear from anyone from his entry, September 1952 to August 1953. Names that come to mind are: J Cox, Featherstone, P Blake, Flook and Stickland. Contact Dusty Miller at dustym7391@talktalk.net or tel: 01752 330024.

UKPSG St Louis: George Masson would like to hear from anyone from the UK Phantom Support Group, St Louis 1965-69. Contact George at georgemasson512@hotmail.com or tel: 01604 432130.

Kenneth William Frank Capper: Seeking any information regarding my father Kenneth Capper. He was born in 1922 and was a LSBA at Haslar in 1948 and also served in Chatham as well as going to sea. If you have any information contact Carol Wood at carol@woods1999.wanadoo.co.uk or write to 16 New Road, Warsash, Southampton, Hants, SO31 9SB.

HMS St George: Seeking information regarding Charles Rumble L/Sig served (Collingwood 263W/W in 1940-41, has photograph of this class) and HMS ships Pennyworth, Chequers (1947-48), and Newcastle and others unknown. His daughter Miriam, living in Queensland, knows very little of her late father's naval service, and would be grateful for some memories from anyone who served with him. Contact Miriam at reception.mtg@mtgarnet.kagura.com.au or Mrs M Newton, Lot 1 Riedeker Road, Innit Hot Springs, QLD 4872, Australia.

Adge Creed: Seeking information regarding ex-Artificer Apprentice A J Elsmore-Creed who was last heard of in the Portsmouth area. If you know about him please contact David Hodges on 01437 721765.

HMS Auckland: On June 24 1941, HMS Auckland was sunk off Tobruk by German and Italian dive bombers. She was engaged in escorting the oil tanker, Pass of Balmaha, urgently required at Tobruk which was under siege by the Germans at the time. With

her was another escort, RAN Parramatta. I would like to contact any person from any of the ships who were present at the sinking, also after photographs of the crew or of the ship before she was damaged. Contact John Solway, 21 Precista Court, 48 High Street, Orpington, Kent, BR6 0LA or tel: 01689 833860.

Final RN Conscript: Seeking the final Royal Navy conscript for National Service, which we believe took place in November 1960. This year is the 50th anniversary of that event and it is intended to make a feature of that fact at this year's Remembrance Parade at the Cenotaph. If you were in the final entry for National Service in the RN contact Neil Trotter, Parade Marshall and Ceremonial organiser for National Service (RAF) Association at costa-rei@ntlworld.com or tel: 01472 233919.

WW2 RN Commando: I am a former Royal Marine Commando and I am researching my grandfather's unit from WW2, NAN Royal Navy Commando. I am hoping to collate enough information to write a book about the Royal Navy Commandos and the amphibious operations in the Mediterranean during World War 2 using NAN Commando as the spine of the story. I have already contacted some former Royal Naval Commandos but would very much like to contact any former Royal Naval Commandos especially those from NAN, GEORGE and DOG Commandos or anybody who knew them. If you can help me I would be most obliged. Contact Griffin Turton at griffin_turton@hotmail.com or tel: 07900 464867.

HMS Rodney: John Shepherd is offering to send a photocopy of a watercolour by Sydney James, that his father had commissioned in 1945. A charge to cover photocopying A3-size, postal tube and airmail stamp should be sent to PO Box 12, Billinudgel, New South Wales, Australia 2483.

Sgt Leonard A Coates: I am trying to contact my cousin Sgt Leonard A Coates of the Royal Marines as part of a family tree research project. Little is known other than he was born in 1943 in East Ham, London to Harry George and Lily Blanch Coates. It is possible that he was stationed in the Devon/Cornwall area. He was discharged in 1975. Contact: Ian Robertson at ian@iandjrobertson.co.uk or tel: 01253 711279.

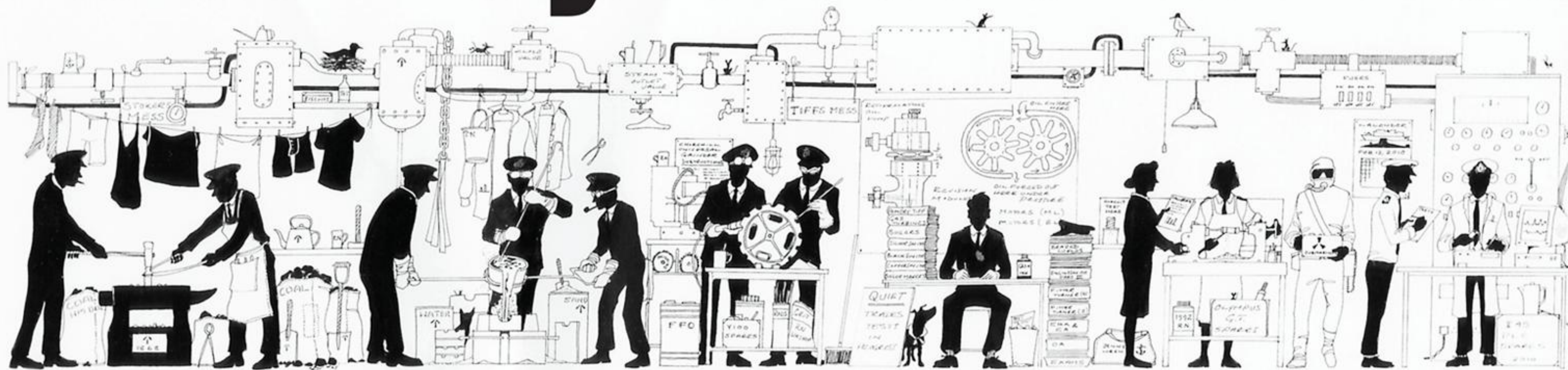
HMS Ceylon 1956-58: Commission: Four members of the Buntings mess of the 1956-58 commission had a mini reunion recently and enjoyed it so much they want a repeat - and would welcome any other ex-mess mates who are still about to join them. Those present were Gordie (Brian Hawkes), Plum (Pelham Warner), Barry Statham and Wally (Brian Walder). If you were a member of the mess and would like to come along to the next gathering, please contact Wally at brian.walder@hotmail.com or tel: 01249 712774.

HMS Cleopatra Old Shipmates Association: On the lookout for new members to join us from both the cruiser and the frigate. Wives/partners are also welcome. We have over 270 members and the subscriptions are only £6 per year. If you are interested in joining then contact the secretary Warwick Franklin at warwick-franklin@hotmail.com or tel: 01752 366611.

The Survey Ship Association: Any past or present member of ships' company of any RN Survey ship is eligible to join as a full member. For further information send a stamped addressed envelope to: The Secretary SSA, 8 Grosvenor Court, 74 East

Lodge Park, Farington, Portsmouth, PO6 1BY or e-mail: secretary@surveyships.org.uk

Last Day of the Tiffies



ANDERSON, Arnold, Bradley, Brookes, Carter, Charles, Chilton, Daniels, Dewis, Diggle, Dodd, Doherty, Doyle, Everson, Farebrother, Harding, Haywood, Huntrods, Jeffrey, Joliffe, Kerton, King, Marper, McColl, McKenna, Newman, Newton, Peggs, Priestley, Rainey, Richardson, Robertson, Saunders, Scott, Shepherd, Silcox, Slack, Turnbull, Upton, Willcocks, Wollaston.



● Last of the old breed... Vice Admiral Andrew Mathews inspects the final class of artificers to join the Royal Navy



● Veteran artificers march past Vice Admiral Mathews on the Sultan dais while (below) an Old Caledonian proudly holds on to the association mascot, Ted the Tiddly Tiff

Pictures: LA(Phot) Darby Allen, HMS Sultan



If it sounds like a class register, it's because it is.

A unique one.

It is the last class of marine engineering artificers – tiffs or tiffies in everyday Jackspeak – to pass out of training and into the Fleet.

On a biting-cold February day on the parade ground of HMS Sultan, these 41 junior and senior ratings marched past guest of honour Vice Admiral Andrew Mathews, Chief of Material Fleet.

But they were not the only tiffs on parade on this historic occasion.

Bringing up the rear, wrapped up warmly in all manner of coats and hats, a good three dozen veteran tiffies carried out the order 'eyes right' to a man (and bear – more about him later...) as they passed the dais.

They received a standing ovation from friends and families of today's generation of marine engineers, among them WO1 Pete Woods, a tiff for 27 years and the senior instructor on the final course; around 3,000 artificers have passed through Sultan during his five years at the establishment.

"It's a poignant day for me," he said. "I'm fiercely proud of being a tiff."

Indeed he is. You'll find few more passionate advocates of the artificer, past or present.

"We go back to Cain in the Bible, God's artificer," he proclaimed.

Well, not quite... More accurately, the days of the ironclad.

The growing mechanisation of the Royal Navy in the 1860s prompted the Admiralty to create a branch of engine room artificers – ERAs.

The branch was given added impetus by Jacky Fisher in 1903; perturbed that the RN might be surpassed technologically by other navies – especially the Germans – the First Sea Lord introduced training for boy artificers which would be "second to none" at Chatham, Plymouth and Portsmouth, the latter housed in a collection of Victorian hulks in the harbour – HMS Fisgard.

The renewed threat from Germany a generation later demanded a fresh breed of tiffs.

In the '30s training was transferred to Chatham and Torpoint with the later addition of HMS Caledonia at Rosyth. Each year 15-year-olds were selected by examination to join up in the engine room, electrical or ordnance – and from 1938, air – categories.

Caledonia and Fisgard have long since gone; since 1983 artificers have been trained at HMS Sultan in Gosport. It embraced them as other establishments had done.

"There's something special about a tiff. They are masters of their craft. They are held in high regard because of their skills, their knowledge," said Capt Graham Watts, Captain RN School of Marine Engineering.

"When you're 1,000 miles from shore, these are the guys you rely on."

Which, of course, begs the question: wherefore the demise of the tiff?

Well, today senior RN engineers believe the title artificer – 'a skilled craftsman' or 'Serviceman skilled in mechanics' in the words of a dictionary – no longer accurately reflects the work of a 21st-Century marine engineer.

In the place of tiffs stand the Engineering Technicians (Marine Engineering) – ET(ME).

"We are not throwing the artificer's skills away," Capt Watts stressed. "These are skills we need, more than

ever with ships such as the incredibly-complex Type 45s."

WO1 Woods added: "An artificer's someone who can look at a problem and come up with a solution to sort it out. And that remit won't change with the ETs."

Among the engineers to benefit from his expertise is LMEA Fred King, one of those final 41 artificers, who's completed two and a half years of training. It required brain and brawn: the final test was to design, then build, a folding bicycle.

"There's a lot of mathematics – up to degree level, but it's also a very physical course, taking apart diesel engines, working with pistons, high-pressure air systems, gas turbines. If you don't work hard, you won't pass," he said.

"It's a shame that there's no-one to continue the artificer name, but we're moving on to better things."

That is something ex-tiffies also acknowledge. They shed a tear at the demise of the branch, but realise that the name might vanish, but not the skills and attitude for which the artificer – the 'think-do men' as former First Sea Lord Admiral Sir Michael Le Fanu called them – are renowned.

"I don't see this as the end of an era," said Rear Admiral John Burgess, who joined HMS Caledonia in early 1945 as a boy artificer.

"When you get to sea, the job is still the same. You still have to face up to the same challenges."

"At the end of the day, a Type 45 is still a tin can on the ocean and you still look to your artificers – or ETs – to put things right."

Still, the old guard couldn't let 142 years of Royal Navy tradition pass into history with a fitting send-off.

"It was a very sad and historic occasion for us, who literally held the Fleet together for over a hundred years," said Gil Harding, historian of the Old Caledonia Artificer Apprentices Association (he's Series 20, Grenville Division for the record...).

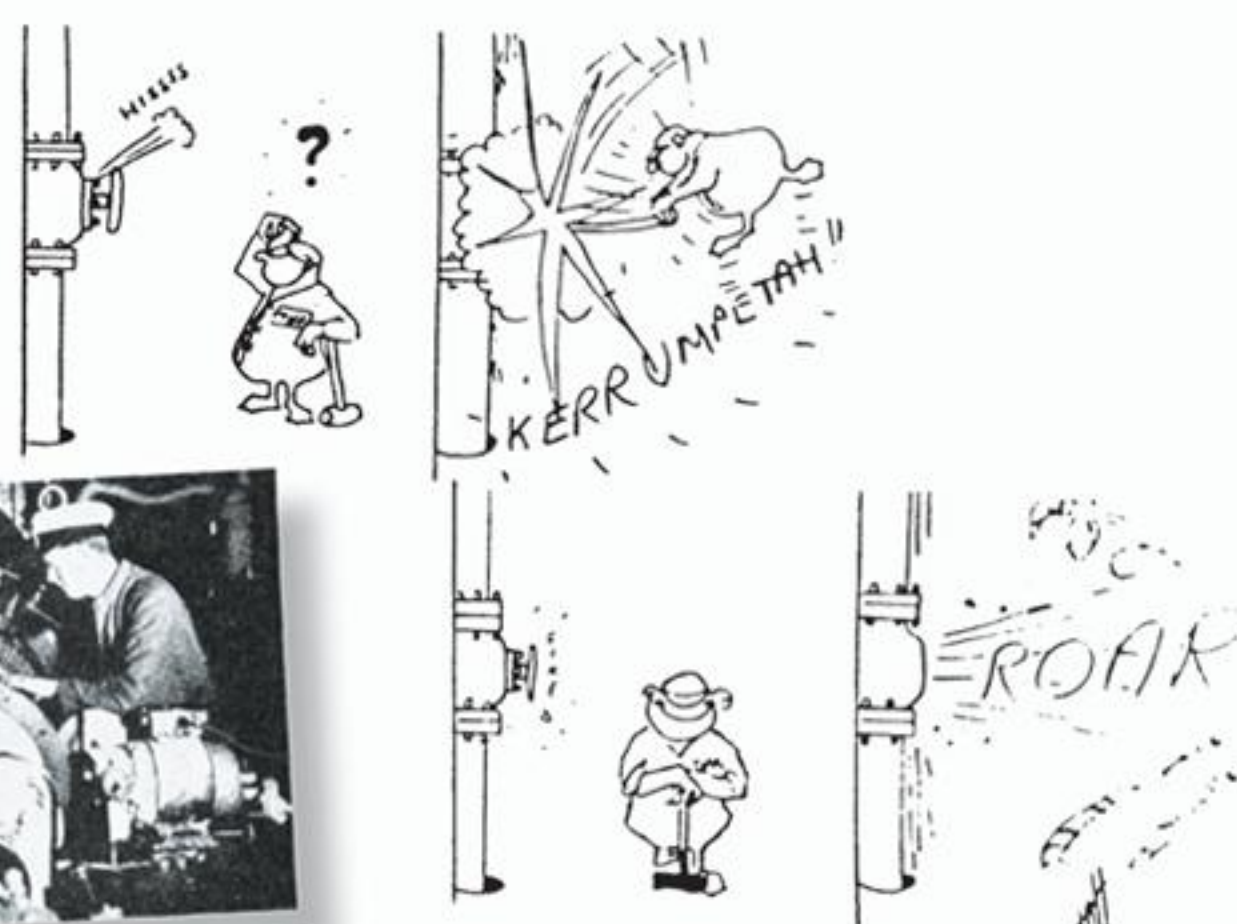
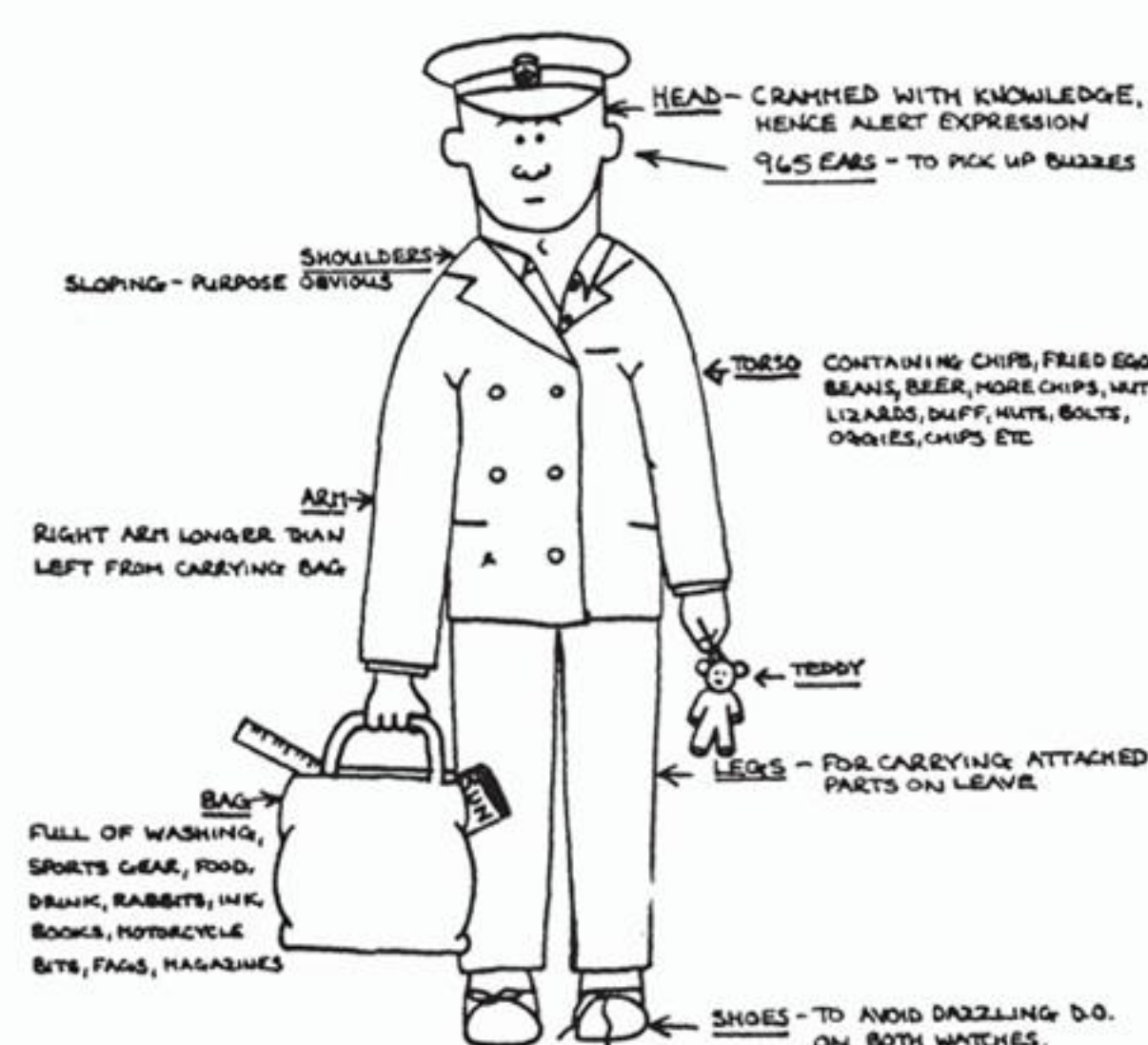
He read out the ERA's lament, then watched his comrades march past...complete with bear.

Ted the Tiddly Tiff is the smallest, (possibly) furriest and arguably most travelled artificer on the planet.

The mascot of the Old Caledonians, he wears the uniform of a fifth-class tiff, circa 1939. Ted globetrotts with his shipmates as far afield as Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and the USA, sends postcards from his trips and is, we're told, "very popular with the ladies"...

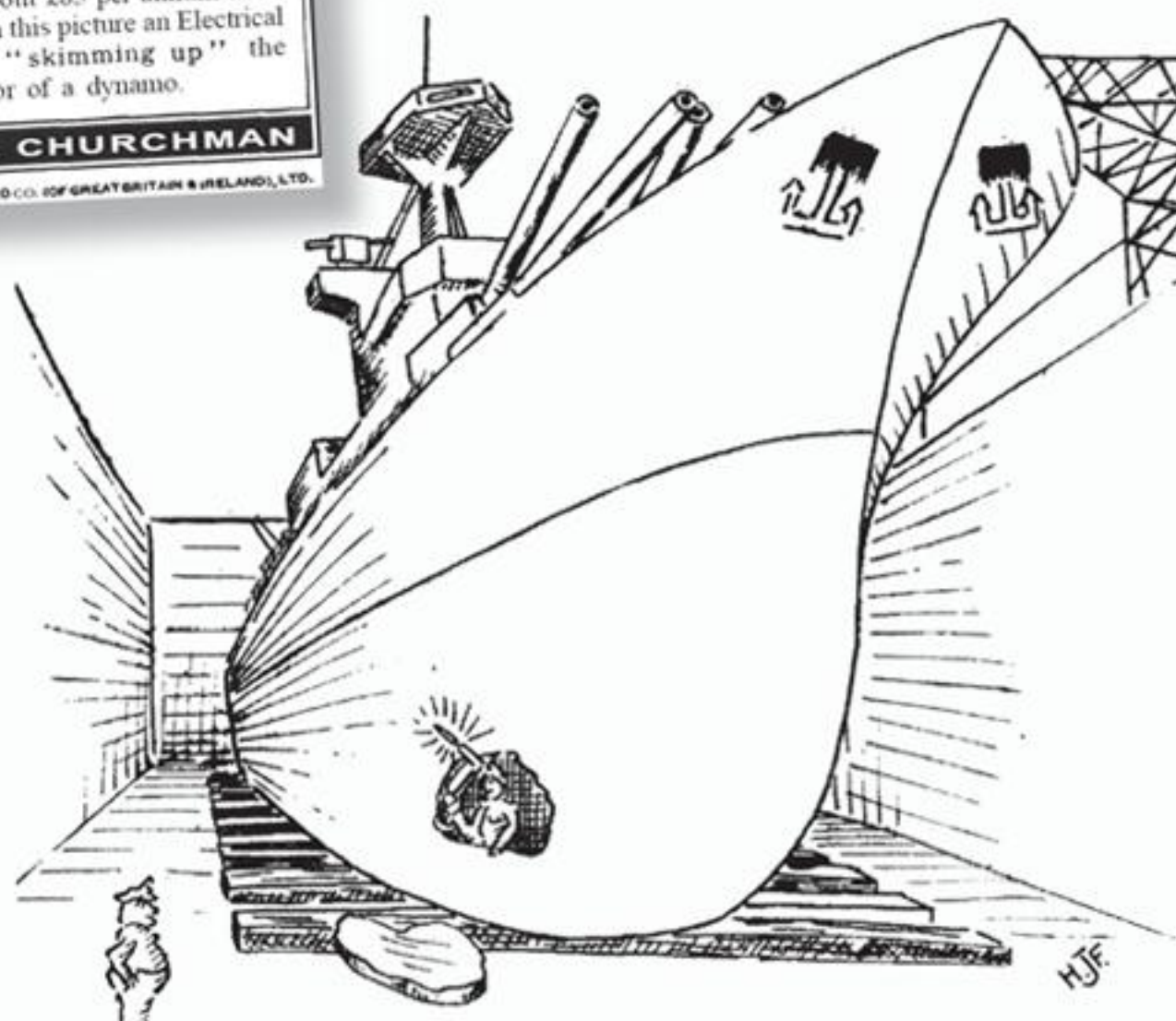
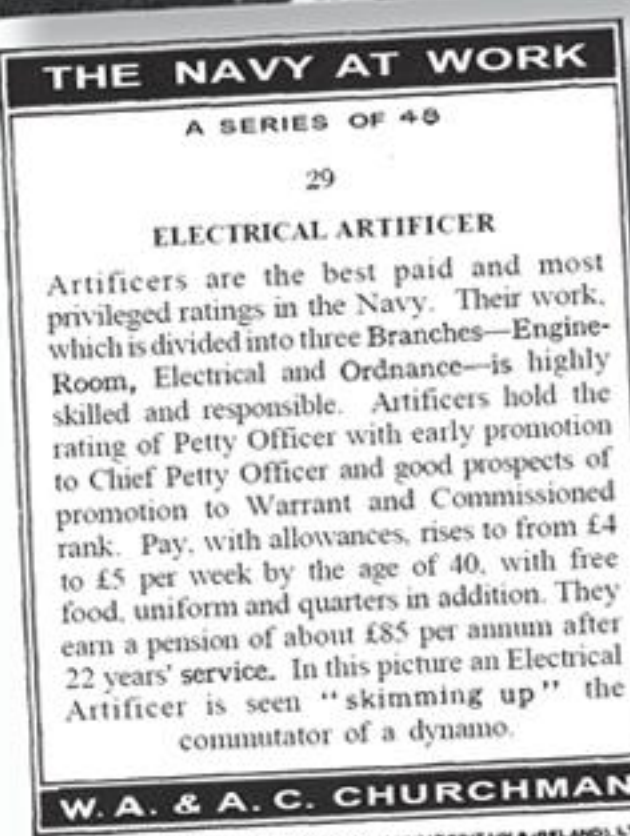
■ THE passing of the tiffs has been marked by artist Andrew Wing in his inimitable silhouette style (at the top of the page if you hadn't guessed already...). Copies of 'End of an ERA' were presented to the last class to pass out of Sultan. Mounted copies are available from Stoke Gallery, 175-177 Stoke Road, Gosport, for £26.50 and framed copies for £36.

COULD YOU BE A 'SUPER TIFF' IN THE R.N.



● The art of being a tiff... Some examples of artificer humour down the years from the HMS Caledonia magazine and (left) a 1937 cigarette card champions the work of the electrical artificer

Images courtesy of Lt Rocky Valvona, HMS Sultan, Gil Harding's HMS Caledonia Story: The Apprentices' Story 1937-1985 and OCAAA.



"Sorry Chief, but I couldn't find my way out'.

From Artifex magazine, Easter 1944

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Recruitment Presentations:

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S027A, HM Naval Base Devonport.
To register please email
rrcplymouth@ctp.org.uk

Tue 11 May 10: 1000-1200 RRC Portsmouth,
Rodney Block, HMS Nelson.
To register please call 02392 724595
or email GTyrrell@ctp.org.uk

Navy
Royal New Zealand Navy

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'Progress still needed' over Forces complaints

THE ARMED Forces are making progress in the handling of complaints – but the system is still dogged by delays, according to the woman charged with monitoring the process.

In her 2009 annual report, Service Complaints Commissioner Dr Susan Atkins said that although the Services have made progress against the objectives set out in her first report in 2008, the complaints system is "not yet operating efficiently, effectively or fairly."

As such, streamlining the process has been earmarked as one of the key areas for improvement for 2010.

Dr Atkins said: "Over the last year, news broadcasts have made us all aware of the challenges faced by those who serve in the Armed Forces and the demands placed on them.

"Where problems arise it is only right that these are sorted out quickly and properly.

"I have been appointed to ensure that the Service complaints system operates efficiently, effectively and fairly so that personnel feel confident that they will be treated properly in their Service life.

"The development of such a system plays an important role in ensuring the operational effectiveness of the Armed Forces.

"There has been real progress this year, with a big shift in awareness of the role of the Service complaints system.

"All three Services have made serious efforts to reduce their backlog of serious complaints and there is evidence that Service personnel are becoming more confident in speaking out against bullying, harassment and other forms of improper treatment."

However, with the majority of complaints she referred to the Services in 2008 still unresolved more than a year later, the commissioner warned: "Cases that drag on for months or even years can have a significantly harmful effect on the health and welfare of all those involved.

"Despite improvements I cannot give an assurance this year that the Service complaints system is yet working efficiently, effectively or fairly."

The full report can be found at <http://armedforcescomplaints.independent.gov.uk/index.htm>

Replica ship survives Cape

A REPLICA of an ancient sailing vessel has survived another dangerous stretch of water as she makes her way round Africa.

The Phoenicia is a primitive wooden vessel based on the design of a Phoenician ship of 600BC – and the project to sail her 17,000 miles around the continent was the brainchild of former Royal Navy officer Philip Beale.

Now an entrepreneur, Philip is a director of Greenly's business advisors, amongst his other interests – but for now he is leader of the Phoenician Ship Expedition, bringing together sailors and adventurers from across the globe.

The ship sailed from Syria in the summer of 2008 in a bid to demonstrate that Phoenicians, an ancient civilisations along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean, could have circumnavigated Africa 2,000 years before the Europeans managed the feat.

One of the early dangers was the passage along the shores of Somalia, where Philip was in constant contact with his erstwhile colleagues in the Navy in case of pirate attacks.

The most recent problem was rounding the notorious Cape of Good Hope, and the 15 international sailors on board breathed a collective sigh of relief as they endured gale-force winds, waves up to seven metres in height and a split mainsail before reaching

Pressure rises as medical unit opens

NAVY divers have a new treatment centre should they suffer 'the bends' on operations or exercises in the Channel.

The purpose-built Hyperbaric Medicine Unit at St Richard's Hospital in Chichester replaces the previous centre at Haslar Hospital in Gosport.

With Haslar now closed, a new treatment centre had to be built – the nearest other specialist hyperbaric units are in Poole or London.

The MOD and defence research firm Qinetiq plumped for St Richard's – chosen ahead of Queen Alexandra Hospital in Portsmouth because it offered best value for money – where the new facility was formally opened by the Deputy Commander-in-Chief Fleet, Vice Admiral Richard Ibbotson.

The admiral knows the value of the unit's centrepiece, the recompression chamber – he had reason to use one in Gibraltar as a junior diving officer some three decades ago.

"If it wasn't for these chambers, I wouldn't be here today," he told guests at the opening.

"This is not just an insurance policy which might never be used. The reality is it's already been used to check whether potential divers can cope with pressure.

"For us, this new unit is a 'win-win'. It's very sensibly located amid acute care facilities; if a diver suffers other injuries as well, he's in the right location."

In layman's terms, the chamber increases pressure, reducing the size of the air bubbles in the body of a diver suffering from decompression sickness, better known as 'the bends'.

The chamber, which can recreate pressures up to a depth



● Vice Admiral Richard Ibbotson in the chamber with members of the St Richard's Hospital Hyperbaric Medicine Unit in Chichester

Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan

of 85 metres (278ft) and has space to treat up to five divers, was transferred from Haslar to St Richard's by low-loader, then craned into its new home.

Although it's owned by Qinetiq and intended for use by Service divers most people benefiting from its specialist treatment are civilians; around 15 sports divers are rescued by the Coastguard in the region every year.

In the first 14 years of its life at Haslar, 541 military/civilian divers were treated inside the chamber.

"Service diving is very safe. We do not have many cases of military divers requiring decompression," explained Surg Cdr Ravi Ramaswami, the RN's Head of Diving and Hyperbaric Medicine.

"We have a chamber on Horsea Island which can be used for really urgent cases and a duty diving

medical officer available 24 hours a day.

"But the Horsea chamber's much smaller and it doesn't have the medical facilities around it like you find here in Chichester."

Beyond treating divers, the chamber will in time be used to treat people suffering from severe burns, carbon monoxide poisoning and anaemia among other illnesses and conditions.

Trace your naval ancestors

VISITORS to Portsmouth Navy Days this summer will get the chance to delve into their families' naval roots.

The Naval Historical Branch, located close to HMS Victory within the naval base, is lining up a panel of experts to give advice on naval family history.

A specialist from the MOD's medal office will also be on hand to answer questions on RN medals and awards.

Jock Gardner, one of the branch's historians, said: "We will be able to point visitors in the right direction, advising on what historical documents they would

need to answer particular queries.

"Also if people bring along ancestors' service certificates we can help explain information contained within them."

The event runs for three days starting on Friday July 30.

Already confirmed among the main attractions are the two new Type 45 destroyers HM ships Daring and Dauntless, while one of the largest ships in the Naval Service, aviation training and casualty receiving ship RFA Argus, is also on the roster.

Visitors should also get to see a couple of Type 23 frigates and the Black Cats helicopter display team.

For further information on Navy Days, including ticket prices and how to book, see www.navydaysuk.co.uk

Rare artefacts go on display

THE Fleet Air Arm Museum at Yeovilton opens the doors to Cobham Hall on April 25 for the first reserve Collection Open Day of the year.

Cobham Hall, a climate-controlled storage building, houses more than 30 historic aircraft and around five miles of shelving, accommodating many of the museum's two million records and 30,000 artefacts.

Among the items to be seen are Westland Whirlwind and Wasp helicopters, a de Havilland Sea Vixen and a Supermarine 510, the latter being the first swept-wing jet to land on an aircraft carrier.

And talking of such things, the hall also houses the world's oldest aircraft carrier – the 1918 Thornycroft seaplane lighter T3, which was towed behind fast destroyers to allow aircraft to take off in World War 1.

The collection will be open for viewing between 10am and 4pm.

Hunting and shooting on HMS Belfast

THE team at HMS Belfast have put together a varied programme of events to draw visitors to the wartime cruiser, permanently berthed in the Pool of London just upstream of Tower Bridge.

As a naval alternative to the traditional Easter egg hunt, from April 2-18 youngsters can follow a rhyming riddle trail around the ship to find ten escaped rats disguised as members of the ship's crew.

Hunt the Rat is included in the standard admission price, and each completed entry form will be entered into a prize draw.

Over May half-term, from May 31-June 6, daily demonstrations of life at sea in HMS Belfast will form part of Korean War Commemoration Week, which will include 4-in gun demonstrations and damage control exercises.

And from July 12-17 veterans from the Korean War will be on board to talk to members of the public about their memories of the conflict and life on board Belfast in the early 1950s.

There will be another hunt in the summer, from August 1-31, when small furry stowaways will be lurking around the ship.

An interactive exhibition on shipbuilding through the ages, Launch!, will also be staged until the end of the year.

For further details on these and other events, including admission prices and opening times, see www.iwm.org.uk

Maps and plans

THE Royal Navy's senior operational commander has paid a visit to the UK Hydrographic Office (UKHO) to see the navigational services and charts which the organisation produces.

Commander-in-Chief Fleet Admiral Sir Trevor Soar's visit included an update briefing on the latest plans for UKHO's maritime services and products – including cutting-edge digital navigation aids and electronic chart systems.



● John Lippiett with the remains of Hatch, the Mary Rose's dog

Picture: Mary Rose Trust

Dog goes home after 465 years

A SEAFARING mongrel has returned home – 465 years after she last set a paw on dry land.

The remains of a two-year-old dog were found trapped in the sliding door of the carpenter's cabin on the Mary Rose, which sank off Southsea in 1545.

Now named Hatch after the circumstances in which she was found, her remains – a painstakingly-preserved and reconstructed skeleton – are now on display alongside artefacts from the ship in the Mary Rose Museum in Portsmouth Historic Dockyard.

Analysis of her bones suggest the dog, possibly an ancestor of the Manchester terrier, spent most of her brief life aboard the ship, where she was possibly employed as a ratter – Tudor mariners did not use cats as they believed they brought bad luck.

John Lippiett, Chief Executive of the Mary Rose Trust – and Hatch's guardian – said: "It is likely that the longest walks she took were along the quayside at Portsmouth, her home town.

"Hatch is just one of 19,000 extraordinary Tudor treasures recovered with the wreck of the Mary Rose, but she has never been on display in Portsmouth simply because we have not had the room.

"All that is set to change with the building of a new permanent Mary Rose museum, bringing together the remains of the ship itself with the pick of her artefacts, displayed at last in their historical context."

The new museum is set to open in 2012, with the conservation of the ship's hull due to be completed four years later.

For more details see www.maryrose500.org



● The Phoenicia seen under sail at the start of the expedition

the safety of Cape Town.

The Phoenicians were arguably the first 'global' civilisation, occupying territory which today comprises the Lebanon, Syria and Israel.

But the mariners travelled far and wide, spreading their influence throughout the Mediterranean over the course of a millennium.

The 20-metre ship was built in Arwad Island, an ancient Phoenician city state just off the Syrian coast, by Syrian shipwright Khalid Hammoud using traditional Phoenician construction methods and materials, using evidence

from relevant shipwrecks and archaeological finds of artefacts such as vases and coins, as well as advice from eminent scholars and shipwrights.

She will have a multi-national crew of up to 16 people on any one leg of the expedition.

The next stage of the voyage was due to get under way as *Navy News* went to press, with St.Helena, the Azores, Gibraltar, Egypt, Lebanon and Syria as planned destinations.

The expedition is approved by the Royal Geographical Society, and full details (including sponsors) can be seen online www.phoenicia.org.uk

EDUCATION

The Best Start In Life

A Navy News Advertorial Feature

Good sports at Kelly In force at Victoria

KELLY College, founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877, is proud of its 130 years of service to the Royal Navy.

Kelly is situated in the beautiful south-west of England and offers a co-educational full and weekly boarding and day education for pupils aged 11-18. It is a school of 360 pupils of whom half are boarders.

Kelly offers all the facilities of a larger school, while retaining the advantages in the individual care and class size of a smaller school.

The Preparatory School is co-educational and has a further 190 pupils aged 2½-11 years. The Prep School shares many of the facilities of the senior school including boarding from Year 5.

Kelly provides a high-quality, well-balanced education with a strong commitment to a whole range of extracurricular activities. The staff are fully involved seven days a week, 24 hours a day.

Kelly enjoys an established reputation for excellent academic results (98.5 per cent pass rate at A-level, with 59 per cent at Grades A and B in 2009) and for its cultural and sporting achievements.

The sporting record of the school is very strong; Kelly has a national reputation in swimming, rugby and athletics, while hockey and netball teams have achieved



● RYA Practical week for Navy Cadets: Chris Barbour, Sandy Osborne, George Harold and Lucy Jones spent a week on the water culminating in Chris being awarded his RYA Day Skipper. The others, following on closely behind and passing their Competent Crew award with flying colours, are now well on their way to achieving their Day Skipper Awards. They are some of the youngest cadets in the country going for this award, which is normally achieved after having owned and skippered a yacht for a year. Kelly College said they should be very proud of their achievements but also their attitude and approach at all times; they were excellent ambassadors.

county and regional success.

At the same time, Kelly is particularly proud of its music and drama and delighted to be taking advantage of the Performing Arts Centre.

One of Kelly's strengths is the

range and diversity of its societies and activities – from squash to shooting, debating to drawing, sailing to surfing, public speaking to pottery – with dozens to choose from there is something for everyone to enjoy.

Welbeck scores 100 per cent

WELBECK has always been one of the most successful sixth form colleges in the country.

The college gained a 100 per cent A-level pass rate in 2008-09 with a 54 per cent pass rate at A grade.

It concentrates on mathematics and science-based subjects, preparing students for science and engineering degrees leading to technical and engineering roles in the Armed Services and Ministry of Defence civil service.

The state-of-the-art campus in Woodhouse near Loughborough has been designed to offer the kind of facilities that young adults would expect, including outstanding teaching and learning resources, high quality, modern halls of residence and superb all weather sporting and other exceptional recreational facilities.

As well as consistently being a top performer in the Sixth Form College league tables for academic results, Welbeck is equally proud of its reputation for the pastoral care and welfare of its students.

They leave Welbeck with high values and standards having experienced a two year programme of academic

excellence, personal development training and a variety of sporting and extra-curricular activities.

This means that students might find themselves exploring Morocco, trekking through the Himalayas or skiing in France.

But whatever activities students pursue, they'll find that they are able to quickly develop teamwork and leadership skills – vital in the type of career that they are following.

Once students have achieved success at Welbeck, they'll be offered a place at Newcastle, Southampton, Aston, Northumbria or Loughborough Universities. For exceptional students, there is the opportunity to attend Oxford or Cambridge.

Education can be an expensive business these days. So it will come as a relief to know that Welbeck will support students, offering financial assistance during their time both at Welbeck and university. The latter comes in the form of an annual bursary, which currently stands at £4,000.

A move to Welbeck will give an invaluable blend of qualifications, skills and experience, and a direct route into a Royal Navy career.

IF YOUR child goes to QVS (as Queen Victoria School is known) he or she will be part of a pupil community made up entirely of the children of Armed Forces personnel.

That sort of mutual understanding and support is invaluable, especially when parents are posted overseas or on long unaccompanied tours. It is a full boarding school, co-educational and tri-service.

The main intake is into the Scottish system's Primary 7 year; there is no exact equivalent with the English system, but most of the P7 intake are aged ten when they join. That said, there is a wide age-range within the year-groups.

Many of the pupils have come from educationally disrupted backgrounds as they have moved from school to school and education system to education system, according to their families' postings.

Because tuition and boarding costs, uniform, books, stationery and most other items of school expenditure are met by the Ministry of Defence, the financial contribution asked of parents is very small.

Currently it is around £1,100 per annum. The contribution covers only non-essentials and helps to make boarding life more pleasant for the pupils: it allows for the provision of newspapers and satellite TV in the Houses, for example, as well as contributing towards the costs of transport for



● Cadets at Queen Victoria School

school outings.

Games and outdoor activities are important parts of life at QVS. Rugby and hockey are the main sports, and the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is pursued at all three levels – Bronze, Silver and Gold.

The school has a beautiful setting in some 45 acres of countryside on the edge of Dunblane, much of which is given over to games pitches and recreational areas.

Academically, the school regularly achieves pass rates at Standard Grade and Higher which are well above the Scottish national averages.

The Ceremonial aspects of school life are central to QVS, and

marching as part of the school on one of the six Parade Sundays a year, and on Grand Day – the final day of the academic year – is one of the proudest moments of a Victorian's life (as well as of his or her parents'!).

The Pipes, Drums and Dancers of QVS are internationally renowned, having played at Tattoos both at home and abroad, most recently in the Edinburgh International Military Tattoo 2008 and Basel International Tattoo 2009.

Dunblane is on a main rail line to Glasgow and Edinburgh, and within easy driving distance of the majority of Forces bases in Scotland.

Queen Victoria School

(Perthshire, Scotland)

is fully funded for tuition and boarding by the Ministry of Defence

Main Intake Point : Primary 7

You are welcome to attend our Open Morning on 18 Sep 2010

Queen Victoria School is open to the children of all ranks. Applicants must have at least one parent serving in the UK Armed Forces who is Scottish or who has served in Scotland.

For further details and an application form, visit www.qvs.org.uk

KELLY COLLEGE



Co-educational Boarding, Weekly Boarding
and Day School for pupils aged 11-18,
Prep Boarding from Year 5
Fee reductions for Service families

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T: 01822 813100

Founded by Admiral Kelly in 1877-
celebrating over 130 years of service to Naval

www.kellycollege.com
Tavistock, Devon



Seafaring at the heart of RHS

THE Royal Hospital School, Suffolk, is proud of its seafaring heritage and as a result provides unique opportunities for naval families.

The school is owned by the Crown Charity, Greenwich Hospital, one of whose charitable objectives is to provide education for the children of seafarers.

The school moved to its impressive site at Holbrook in Suffolk in 1933 and, today, is regarded as one of the country's leading independent co-educational boarding schools for 11 to 18 year olds.

Its maritime tradition lives on and not only does it have some of the finest sailing facilities of any school in the country, the school offers a range of discounts and bursaries to seafaring families, making boarding school more affordable.

Those currently in the Navy and eligible for the MOD Continuity of Education Allowance (CEA) can benefit from the school's reduced fee, set so that the total parental contribution is just £625 per term (2009-10).

● Sailing with the Royal Hospital School



Those who leave the Navy or become ineligible for MOD CEA, can apply for a means-tested seafaring bursary.

Both the children and grandchildren of serving or retired RN, RM or UK Merchant Navy personnel can apply for a bursary and there is a seafarer's discount which equates to 15 per cent discount off the full boarding fee.

The curriculum is broad and

balanced, combining the finest of academic traditions with the latest technologies and with small class sizes, every pupil receives close individual guidance.

Uniquely, all new pupils in Year 7 receive RYA sailing tuition as part of the curriculum and, as a result of the school's seafaring heritage, water-sports play an important part in the sporting programme.

Duke of York academy

AT THE heart of any good school lie high expectations.

Duke of York School is proud that yet again last summer its pupils enjoyed success both in their GCSEs and A-level results.

Ninety-two per cent of the school's GCSE candidates gained the government's benchmark academic figure of five or more GCSE passes including Mathematics and English.

This is well above the national average for both state and independent education.

The A-level results were also very good with 97 per cent of A2 students being offered places at their first choice university with almost 50 per cent of them achieving passes at A-B grades.

The school was originally founded in 1801 to take the sons and daughters of soldiers who had died fighting for their country in the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars.

The school moved to Dover in 1909 and it has continued to thrive.

In 1994 girls were re-invited to join the school and it is now a full boarding school for children whose parents are serving in the British Armed Forces.

This year is going to be a big year for the school as in 2009 a Statement of Intent was made to change the school to Academy status from September 2010.

It is anticipated that the formal declaration will be signed in the spring of 2010.

The Statement of Intent saw the start of a multi-million pound upgrade of the schools boarding facilities and the build of a new sixth-form boarding house.

Work is now well under way with new bath houses being installed into the existing boarding houses and with the new sixth-form boarding house which is due to be ready for September 2010.



● Children from St John's College celebrate World Book Day

Books come to life at St John's College

PUPILS at St John's College junior school in Southsea celebrated World Book Day by dressing up as their favourite literary characters.

They also honoured the spirit of the day by raising vital funds to support a library project in Kenya.

Kekopev School in Kenya is situated in a deprived area and the school library doesn't just lack books, it also lacks a proper roof or floor.

St John's College teacher Lizzie Grubb has visited the school in Kenya and been fundraising for them for some time.

Talking about the World Book Day fundraiser, she said: "We're delighted that the children have shown such enthusiasm for the event - their love of books really shines through."

"It's also heartening to see how

keen they all are to help other children in the world who are far less fortunate than themselves.

"Even the smallest amount raised can make such a big difference, and since World Book Day is all about celebrating the power and value of literature in our lives, these children have really captured the spirit of the day."

Pupils paid £1 each to be dressed as their favourite character, and raised £150.

The money they raised has purchased new books for the library in Kenya.

The previous collection had been damaged because the roof was not watertight and the library was in desperate need of stock following the roof repairs.

St John's College have pledged to continue to support the restoration project next term.



A full boarding and day school set in 200 acres of stunning Suffolk countryside, the Royal Hospital School provides exceptional academic and extra-curricular education for boys and girls aged 11 to 18 years.

Open Morning

Saturday 8th May 2010 at 9.30am

Discounts available for seafaring families and services families eligible for MOD Continuity of Education Allowance

Academic, Art, Music and Sports Scholarships

For more information visit www.royalhospitalschool.org or contact Susan Lewis on 01473 326210 or email admissions@royalhospitalschool.org



St John's

An independent day & boarding school for boys & girls aged 2-18

- ★ Academic excellence
- ★ Continuity
- ★ Firm foundations
- ★ Caring community
- ★ Sport for all
- ★ A chance to perform



Tel: 023 9281 5118 Visit our website www.stjohnscollege.co.uk

St John's College, Grove Road South, Southsea, Hampshire PO5 3QW



Fees for families claiming the service boarding allowance are set so that for the current year parental contribution is only £1,875.

Open Morning: 29th April 2010, 9:30am - 11:00am

Recently declared 'outstanding' for boarding by OFSTED



AFFORDABLE EXCELLENCE

- Generous Forces Allowance
- Outstanding academic results
- Academic, all-rounder and music scholarships
- Entry at all ages 9 - 18 years
- Just off junction 26 on the M5

For more information please call 01823 668800 or email admin@wellington-school.org.uk



Wellington School

wellington-school.org.uk

Education, relocation, education

RELOCATING can be a stressful time for any family and moving schools can be especially difficult for your children.

The Children's Education Advisory Service (CEAS) exists to offer you help and support with the issues around education and relocation.

It is advisable to start planning early to give more time to resolve problems. If your child is at a critical time in their education, ie GCSE, AS or A-level years, you may be able to retain your house in Service Families Accommodation.

Contact your housing provider for further information about the support for retention of quarters.

CEAS is here to help if you need information, guidance or support and produce a *Moving School Pack* of booklets designed to help parents and children prepare for a move of schools.

The packs are available from the CEAS website or office.

Contact the local HIVE, who will have information on the local educational establishments.

If possible, arrange to visit schools – inspection reports alone do not tell you whether the school will be suitable for your child.

Apply as soon as possible for your preferred school. Although the law in England allows you to state a preference it does not require the Local Authority to allocate your preferred school.

CEAS can offer advice on the process of admission appeals or help in the wording of the appeal. However, do look at the school being offered by the Local Authority as it may satisfy your requirements.

If you have any worries about admissions, appeals or any other matter regarding the education of your children, please contact CEAS for information and advice: www.mod.uk/ceas, e-mail enquiries@ceas.detsa.co.uk, helpline 01980 618244.

Traditional Shebbear

TO many people a boarding school in the English countryside conjures up scenes of a bygone age: misty, dewy mornings, a place where the air is healthy and good for you, where children can climb trees, camp out and do the things that you read about in the Enid Blyton books.

At Shebbear College the school strives to have the best of the old but add to it the very best of the present. The natural elements of peace and quiet, fresh air and space to play are combined with modern facilities housed in historic buildings.



● Cadets of Trinity School Teignmouth CCF proudly display their new climbing equipment funded generously by an AT grant from RN CCF HQ

Trinity School's high climbers

NEW helmets, harnesses and ropes will enable cadets at Trinity School in Teignmouth to make best use of the CCF climbing wall in the school grounds and to venture further afield to local climbing spots such as the Dartmoor Tors and sandstone cliffs of the South Devon coast.

The cadets had another reason to look cheerful as they were looking forward to seeing the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh when they visited Exeter in March.

The royal couple arrived at Wyvern Barracks in the city in the morning having travelled to the South West by royal train to mark the start of the year of Cadet 150 celebrations in Devon.

About 1,000 cadets from CCF contingents, Sea Cadet Corps, Army Cadet Force and Air Training Corps across the county were present on the parade ground.

It was a very special day for Cadet Cox'n Alexandra Turner, who is head of the RN Section and pictured centre in her best uniform.

Alex was appointed as the Lord Lieutenant's CCF cadet for the County of Devon last October and she accompanied the Lord Lieutenant Eric Dancer throughout the visit and was presented to the Queen.

Dream at West Hill

WEST Hill Park is a co-educational day and boarding school for pupils aged between 2½ and 13, situated in 25 acres of beautiful grounds between Southampton and Portsmouth (just one hour from Heathrow and close to regional airports and rail terminals).

The children enjoy a safe and secure environment with the opportunity to progress through the school on a single site.

Effort, enthusiasm and conduct are highly prized. The school exists to build and secure self-confidence in every child, so that all may progress as far as their capabilities and dreams will take them.

SHEBBEAR COLLEGE

Educating the Individual Since 1841

Ages 5 to 18 Years
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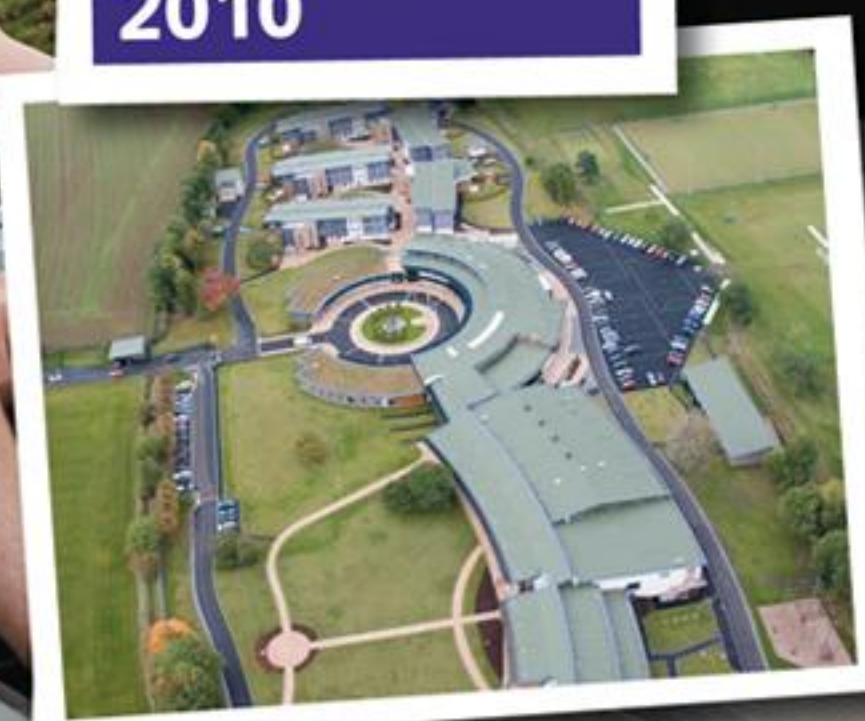
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Cash used for new safety boat

HOLYHEAD unit is considerably closer to rebuilding its collection of boats following a donation from defence giant BAE Systems.

The company handed over £2,500 at a presentation held in the unit's HQ at Newry Beach.

Receiving the donation, chairwoman Ann Kennedy said: "It is these generous donations by companies like BAE Systems that allow us to continue our work at the heart of a hard-put-upon community."

"These young people are our future and a wonderful example of the town's best."

"We owe them the very best chances."

Angela Owen, who presented the cheque on behalf of the defence company, said: "BAE Systems is an employer of Anglesey people at RAF Valley and is fully committed to being part of the island community."

"Supporting valuable and important community groups such as the Holyhead Sea Cadets is a solid expression of that commitment."

The Commanding Officer of TS Prince of Wales, Lt (SCC) Sue Williams RNR, said: "This money will now allow us to buy a safety boat."

"A safety boat will guarantee that the cadets can go out training on the water and have fun in boats as often as opportunity presents."

Worthing enjoy the view from the Ark

A GROUP from Worthing unit was given the chance to see the Royal Navy's newest class of surface ship when they paid a visit to Portsmouth Naval Base.

Two dozen cadets and six staff from TS Vanguard, including a number of members of the Marine Cadet detachment, travelled to Portsmouth under the direction of Lt Andrew Parker to visit HMS Daring and HMS Ark Royal.

The group was given a grand tour of the destroyer's facilities, from the flight deck to the bridge.

The group was fascinated by the new Type 45 warship and her capabilities, and their questions led to some interesting conversations on the way forward for the Navy.

"The new lines of the ship and the sleek look really made a great impression as well as the modern systems used to help this warship in its quest," said CPO (SCC) Robert Picknell, the unit's First Lieutenant.

"HMS Ark Royal was a good reflection of a different era of warship compared to HMS Daring, and it was astounding



● Cadets from Worthing unit at the top of the ramp on HMS Ark Royal

Picture: TI Colin O'Neill (MCD)

how much space was on board. "We entered HMS Ark Royal and stood in the hangar. "We looked right facing forward

and saw two lifts, one up and one down.

"We then proceeded to the bridge via the medics' and

paymasters' compartments.

"We had a great view, and the cadets were astounded that they were able to stand on the bridge of HMS Ark Royal – it was something they could tell their school friends.

"We then were allowed to walk to the top of the ski jump on the bow section and then to the aft."

Sam is the one

A SHIRLEY and District cadet has been chosen to receive the title of West Midlands Lord Lieutenant's Cadet for 2010-11.

POC Sam Merchant joined as a Junior Cadet at the age of ten and has worked his way up to his current standing as the senior cadet in the unit.

His nomination was in recognition of all the hard work which Sam put in over the past months and years, placing him at the head of the list of applicants from across the West Midlands.

As the successful candidate, Sam will be asked to carry out a number of duties at ceremonial and presentation evenings held by the Lord Lieutenant, Paul Sabapathy, during the year.

Wallasey visit

A SERVING soldier has visited Wallasey unit to thank them for the boxes of goodies sent to him and his colleagues while on deployment.

Staff Sgt Lee Norman, of the Royal Corps of Signals, presented the unit with a plaque, and thanked the youngsters for their efforts – shoe boxes full of sweets, chewing gum, pens, toothpaste, biscuits and cakes were well received by those on the front line.

Along with those of other local groups and Mrs Kay Hurst, who parcels up the shoe boxes, more than 500 such gifts were sent out from the Wirral.



● The guard at the wedding of David Edwards and Natalie Bostock

Wedding guard

CADETS from Stoke-on-Trent unit put on a guard for a member of staff at her wedding.

Natalie Bostock, daughter of unit CO Bev, was a cadet at TS Talent from the age of 11, and at 18 transferred across to become a member of staff.

She is still with the unit at the age of 23, and towards the end of last year married fiancé David Edwards at the Church of Saints Mary and Chad, Longton.

As they left the church after the ceremony, the married couple were delighted to find the Sea and

Marine Cadets forming a guard. Natalie's grandfather, Michael Derricott, served in the Royal Navy for ten years and is a former Ganges Boy.

In 1992 he was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia, and was told he did not have long to live.

But he was still around almost 20 years later to fulfil his wish to see his granddaughter married.

With that ambition achieved, he had to come up with another target – to see his great grandson either play for Manchester United or join the Royal Navy.



● Brothers Usama, Hamza and Abbas Ibrahim at the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Hanley

Three brothers, three forces

THREE brothers, three Armed Forces, one simple solution.

The brothers Ibrahim – Sea Cadet Usama, aged 12, Army Cadet Hamza, aged 18, and Air Cadet Abbas, aged 17 – were on duty outside the Potteries Museum and Art Gallery in Hanley for a visit by the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall, who were in the Midlands to mark the centenary of the city of Stoke-on-Trent's federation as a county borough.

The royal party took time to stop to chat to the tri-Service cadet guard, of which the brothers were members, before viewing the Staffordshire Hoard treasure as part of a whistle-stop tour of the city.

The brothers said they joined different services so they would be treated as individuals rather than someone following in the others' footsteps, and all felt very proud to represent their particular Service on the day.

Excalibur helps heroes

MEMBERS of the Glastonbury and Street unit were honoured to be invited to the first ever Help for Heroes service of thanksgiving, held at Wells Cathedral in Somerset.

The cadets of TS Excalibur manned the exits to take donations as people left the service – and a grand total of £2,245 was collected.

Pictured are (back row, from left) Cdt Griffin, PO Badman, LC Casey, Cdt Vinnell, PO Forrester and Cdt Chudlow; (front row) AC Jeffries, Junior Cdt Chinnock, AC Gwillam.

Among the congregation were injured soldiers, their families and friends and local dignitaries.



Sporting chances

ROYAL Navy physical training staff hosted cadets from St John's College unit in Southsea – the first Sea Cadet unit to be attached to a school.

The Sea Cadets, aged from nine to 13, played arcane games including Swedish longball and bucketball, popular sports within the Senior Service (an example of which is pictured right).

After the games were completed the cadets were each given a Royal Navy T-shirt and a water bottle.

Picture: LA(Phot) Keith Morgan



● Andy Hogg at his retirement

Tiverton supporter mourned

A KEEN supporter of Tiverton unit has died at the age of 80.

Andy Hogg left the Royal Navy as a warrant officer in 1986 after 37 years of service, becoming the oldest man afloat.

He served in 14 ships, including four aircraft carriers, and with seven years in HMS Hermes he came to regard it as his second home.

He was resident barber on most ships, claiming he knew everyone on board – at least by the backs of their heads.

Using funds raised by this 'evening work', Andy supported various Naval charities, including the cadets of TS Hermes; in 1978 he received the MBE for his charitable work.

A devout Christian, Andy was strictly teetotal and a regular attendee at Naval Christian Fellowship meetings held on board his ships.

Andy was married to Irene for 57 years and they had five children.

Four more boats – but lots to do

WHITEHAVEN unit has four more boats to use when getting cadets out on to the water – but needs a little help with the more mundane aspects of unit life.

The four second-hand Toppers, in very good condition, were bought in January, and with the unit's two Picos should provide youngsters with more opportunities to learn sailing techniques in very forgiving boats.

So things are looking up on the sailing front, but there is work to be done shore side.

Whitehaven is again hosting its International Maritime Festival at the end of June, and in previous years TS Bee has hosted cadets from other units who 'camped out' at the unit HQ.

The unit is also planning to hold special training courses and go sailing, which would again involve camping out.

But recent changes to regulations means that a considerable amount of building work has to be carried out before official approval can be sought.

New toilets, new showers and extra fire doors are top of the Whitehaven wish-list, and work should ideally be carried out by the end of this month if the necessary 'licence' is to be attained in time to make the best of the summer.

A small amount of cash is earmarked for the work, but unit officials admit it is nowhere near enough to achieve what is required.

If anyone can help with funds towards the building work, or by sponsoring a couple of fire doors or with fund-raising, contact TS Bee at enquiries@tsbee.org.uk or call 01946 66093.

Booty goes to Barrow

BARROW Marine Cadet Detachment has won the SRMO Trophy for the most improved detachment in the country.

North West Area Officer Lt Col John Davies presented the trophy to the cadets on a recent visit.

Last year the Barrow Marine Cadets achieved the highest marks in their field assessment across the whole of the North West Area, which went a long way towards the overall marks.

The Marine Cadets undertake a wide variety of activities, including fieldcraft and weapon training, as well as boatwork training similar to the Sea Cadets.



● The Lord Lieutenant of Greater Manchester, Col Warren Smith, with Jenny (centre) and Helen Lane

Poppy appeal praise

OLDHAM unit was one of the cadet forces singled out for praise at the Poppy Appeal annual awards evening at the Belle Vue Territorial Army Centre in Manchester.

TS Onslow managed to rake in almost £8,500 as a unit – and two of its members were also lauded for their individual efforts.

AC Jenny Lane, aged 17, personally raised just under £1,600 while her sister LC Helen Lane, aged 15, accounted for almost £1,050.

Jenny said: "Raising money for the Poppy Appeal is our way of



● The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall at the flagpole ceremony in snowy Wootton Bassett

Picture: Paul Crouch (RAF Lyneham)

Cadets help at flagpole ceremony

THE Prince of Wales has visited Wootton Bassett to attend the ceremonial dedication of a new flagpole in the Wiltshire town.

Accompanied by the Duchess of Cornwall, Prince Charles watched as Sea Cadets from Wootton Bassett unit TS Turbulent took part in the ceremony in the High Street.

The Prince also laid wreaths at the town's war memorial.

OC Ben Dixon had the honour of raising the Union Flag, assisted by bosun's mate OC Ashley Masterton.

OC Daniel Garlick undertook the role of quartermaster.

Prior to the flag-raising, OC Garlick presented the wreath to be laid by the Prince of Wales, and OC Masterton presented the wreath to be laid by the Duchess of Cornwall.

Following the ceremony the Royal couple met the cadets.

Southend show off their skills

SOUTHEND unit has just had its annual Corps 'MOT' – the annual Royal Navy Inspection.

The inspection, on this occasion carried out by Cdr Paul Haines, is one of the key events in any Sea Cadet unit's calendar.

As well as inspecting the buildings and infrastructure, the inspection tests the cadets' skills in various tasks including their ceremonial drill.

The evening started with Cdr Haines inspecting the guard, which this year was made up entirely of

members of the Marine Cadets detachment.

After a full ceremonial Royal Navy Colours ceremony, the cadets demonstrated their skills and knowledge of Sea Cadet and Royal Navy subjects with a number of evolutions.

The first of these was a day in the life on board a warship.

The evolution included first aid, cook/steward skills, navigation and marine engineering.

This was followed by a leadership and communication game by the Junior Section, and finally the Marine Cadet detachment demonstrated their infantry skills in setting up an overnight camp and dealing with 'enemy contact'.

Counting on them

SIX cadets from Harrow and Wembley unit formed a carpet guard for a dinner held by the Worshipful Company of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales.

The nautical theme was reflected in the choice of HQS Wellington, moored on Victoria Embankment, as the venue for the dinner.

The cadets were of great assistance during the evening, and following their duties managed to hold their own dinner in the captain's cabin.

The Chartered Accountants raise funds for charitable purposes, generally benefiting educational or training projects, and at the end of 2008 donated £2,000 to TS Dundas which has gone towards the funding of equipment and courses for the cadets, including sailing and marine engineering – resulting in two members of the unit recently completing their BTEC First Diplomas in Engineering.

Officer-in-Charge at TS Implacable S/Lt (SCC) Les Hawkins RNR said: "I am extremely pleased and proud of every one of the cadets who put in so much hard work and effort on the night."

"It was also pleasing to see so many parents and friends on the night, as well as our VIP guest, the Mayor of Southend [Cllr Brian Smith]."

"My debrief with Cdr Haines at the end of the evening was extremely positive, and I am confident we will retain our status as one of the top Sea Cadet units in London and Essex."

Southend Sea Cadets meet on Tuesday and Thursday evenings at their HQ in Milton Road, Westcliff.



● Outstanding Southwark cadet AC Callum Malone

Top award for Callum

A SOUTHWARK cadet has been rewarded for his efforts by receiving a top award from a City livery company.

AC Callum Malone received the accolade of Outstanding Cadet at TS Cossack at the awards dinner of the Worshipful Company of Scientific Instrument Makers.

Callum has gained a number of qualifications through the year, including RYA Sailing Stage 4, Coxswain and Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award, and is aiming to add to the list during 2010.

As a mainstay drummer and bugler in the Southwark band, he also has his sights set on becoming a Cadet Drill Instructor, having been a member of London's platoon for the 2009 Trafalgar Day Parade.

The City company has various affiliations, including survey ship HMS Roebuck.



● The Heffy family's celebratory cake at Huyton with Roby

A piece of cake...

HUYTON with Roby is celebrating the news that it has been assessed as one of the top three units in the country.

Having claimed the Stephenson Trophy – making them the best unit in the North West Area – staff and cadets were thrilled to be told that the Captain of Sea Cadets, Capt Mark Windsor, had awarded them the Captain's Cup.

And the officer visited the unit to present the trophy in person.

Capt Windsor inspected the unit and was given a series of presentations.

Huyton with Roby cadets have taken honours in national competitions, represented the Corps on foreign exchange trips, and the unit claims the highest number of members completing BTECs in public services.

His visit was celebrated by the cutting of an impressive cake, made by LC Heffy and his sister.

VIP guest boosts HQ fund

A GUEST at the Buxton unit Inspection evening was the bearer of good news for staff and cadets.

Cllr Robin Baldry, chairman of Derbyshire County Council, expressed his admiration for the activities of the cadets and the hard work of the staff under CO Lt (SCC) Bruce Luckman RNR.

He then announced that a contribution of £500 would be given towards the cost of the proposed extension to the unit HQ from his council Community Leadership Fund; the building work will provide a larger hall, new classrooms, a boat shed, a larger galley, new toilets and better office and storage space.

Cllr Baldry also presented an Excellence in the Community Award to PO Trevor Woolford for his 29 years service.

A presentation was made by unit chairman Martin Fisher to Howard Schofield, who stood down as chairman last October after more than 12 years in office; during that time he was instrumental in rescuing the unit from near-closure and guiding it to its current state as an active and successful group.

Organisations who support the Sea Cadet unit were represented, including the Buxton and High Peak RNA, Buxton Round Table, the Rotary Club of Buxton, the Mayoral Charities Committee and the East Midlands Reserve Forces and Cadets Association.

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● Lt Paul Patterson

Rescuers awarded bravery medals

TWO men conducting a Sea Cadet exercise who rescued a member of the public from drowning have been rewarded for their prompt actions.

PO Anthony Navi and Lt Paul Patterson were presented with bravery medals and citations by the Commanding Officer of HMS Bulwark, Capt Gavin Pritchard, on behalf of the committee of the Tyne Lifeboat Society at a ceremony on board the assault ship during a visit to the North East.

The recipients of the medals were supervising a Sea Cadets exercise on the Tyne at Hebburn when a member of the public fell into the water and started drifting down river with his face in the water.

They sped towards him and hauled him, semi-conscious and struggling, aboard their safety boat and administered first aid before passing him on to emergency services on shore.

They were commended for their successful rescue effort.

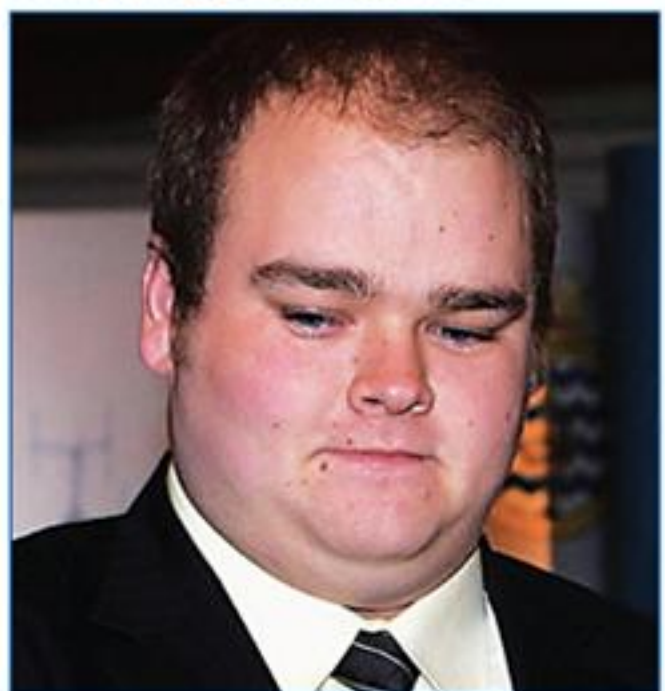
The Tyne Lifeboat Society dates back 221 years to 1789 when a group of local shipowners formed a lifeboat committee.

They offered a reward for the creation of a purpose-designed lifeboat, which would be the very first to be designed and built with the sole objective of saving lives.

William Wouldhave is credited with the best original design concept, and Henry Greathead was commissioned to adapt its design and build the boat, which was named the Original.

Although it ceased to operate lifeboats independently on the river in the 1960s, the society also aimed to 'Grant Awards, Donations or Annuities to any deserving person or persons who shall have been identified with the work of lifesaving on the River Tyne', an objective that is still fulfilled today.

The society can be contacted through John Lightfoot on 0191 454 8595, email john@solasolv.com or secretary Dr Chris May at chris_may@talktalk.net



● PO Anthony Navi

Diamond date

THE new satellite division of Northampton and Wellingborough unit has been formally recognised by the Marine Society and Sea Cadets.

Eastern Area Officer Cdr Smith marked the occasion by presenting LC Column Hodgson with the formal appointment certificate for Rushden Diamond Division – the culmination of five years of growth at the new facility.

The ceremony took place

A GROUP of 11 cadets from Chiltern unit made good use of their half term by jetting off to the Mediterranean.

The 11 youngsters were the guests of the Malta GC unit, and enjoyed a comprehensive programme put together by the Maltese under the supervision of Officer-in-Charge Lt (SCC) Donald Montebello RMR.

Chiltern cadets and staff were accommodated and victualled at the Malta unit, and local staff and cadets escorted and joined their visitors on most of the events which were organised for them.

CPO (SCC) Keith Jones, the Commanding Officer of Chiltern, plus two staff and the unit treasurer escorted the cadets from the UK.

Among the highlights was a visit to the ancient walled city of Mdina, a tiny inland fortified settlement which was at one time the capital of the island.

Another trip saw them visit the Maltese Civil Protection Department, which included lessons about how smoke and heat affect people.

There was also hose-running and basic fire fighting, which naturally ended with a water fight.

Another visit took them to Fort Rinella, overlooking the entrance to Grand Harbour, which houses one of the last remaining 100-ton guns left in the world.



● Cadets and staff from TS Arrow, the Chiltern unit, with local cadets during their visit to the ancient city of Mdina in Malta

This gun, built by a division of Armstrong to counter the threat of similarly-equipped Italian battleships (their guns were also supplied by Armstrong), was never fired in anger.

The tour guides at the fort, on the east side of the harbour mouth, all dress in traditional

period costumes, and part of the tour was to show visitors how the old muskets worked, including a demonstration firing.

The youngsters watched the cannon fired at midday at the Upper Barrakka Gardens in Valletta, then went for a trip on a traditional Maltese Dghajsa, or

water taxi, taking a tour of the spectacular Grand Harbour, once crowded with warships.

Entertainment in the evenings included ten-pin bowling, a chance to see the sights and sounds of the lively Floriana Carnival, and a final-night barbecue and disco before the group headed home.



South West take football honours

MORE than 160 cadets from across the UK converged on Cosford to compete for the prizes in the National Five a Side football tournament.

All the teams taking part represent their areas, each having been crowned champions of their own patch.

The finals were held on two pitches and had to be played over two days.

Captain of Sea Cadets Capt Mark Windsor watched the competition

unfold, and presented prizes at the tournament's conclusion.

Capt Windsor said: "The cadets were extremely well-behaved and the sportsmanship first class."

Also present was Capt Steve Greenwood, Director Support and Deputy Commandant at DCAE Cosford, the former RAF base.

Junior Girls (Wain Cup): Bronze: Eastern, Silver: Northern Ireland, Gold: South West; Player of the tournament: OC G Phillips (NI).

Junior Boys (Ganges Cup): Bronze: Northern, Silver: Eastern, Gold: South West; Player of the tournament: Cdt K Sawyers (South West).

Senior Girls (Willmott Cup): Bronze: Northern, Silver: Southern, Gold: Eastern; Player of the tournament: MC2 C Lancaster (Eastern).

Senior Boys (Guinness Cup): Bronze: Northern, Silver: Northern Ireland, Gold: South West; Player of the tournament: LC S Brown (Eastern).

Overall trophy (Lord Burnham Cup) went to South West.



● Above: Capt Mark Windsor (left) and Capt Steve Greenwood present the trophy to representatives of the four South West teams, three of which won their competitions. Top: action from the senior boys match between South West and Southern

Telford's evening of the stars

TELFORD unit's awards evening was a particular triumph for one cadet this year.

POC Maria Hoyles was named Cadet of the Year, reflecting the hard work and determination she has put in this year.

Maria attended the first class cook/steward course and achieved her RYA powerboating qualification with planning endorsement before attending the Petty Officer Course at HMS Caledonia.

Other achievements to POC Hoyles' name are her BTEC Diploma in public services, and her certificate was presented on the evening.

Another certificate she received was for the completion of her silver Duke Of Edinburgh Award.

Maria said: "What made me so determined last year was I wanted to gain PO Cadet rate before I go into the Royal Navy."

She hopes to eventually train to be a logistician.

But the combined RN Parade and awards evening was not just about one person – it was a chance for TS Wrekin to show the calibre of its cadets.

Inspecting officer was Capt Steve Greenwood, who complimented the cadets on their turn-out and said that "the drill ceremony was of a very high standard."

Other guests who attended the evening were Anna Turner (High Sheriff of Shropshire), Anne Gee (ex-High Sheriff), the Fleet Air Arm Association (Wrekin Branch), the Market Drayton branch of the RNA and the RBL (Jackfield branch) – these two organisations raised funds to purchase a standard and accessories so Telford have their own standard to parade.

Mr and Mrs Jenkins from the Owen Trust, through the unit's connection with Anne Gee, donated £500 which will go towards training activities.

Lt Cdr (SCC) Phil Patterson RNR (District Officer for Mercia) also inspected the cadets and chatted with them.

Other cadets who picked up unit trophies were OC Luke Bunting (waterborne trophy) and AC James Payne (non-waterborne trophy).

James was also awarded the Shipmate of the Year award, a trophy donated by the Fleet Air Arm Association and decided by the cadets themselves.

Weather damages facilities

HARSH winter conditions have taken their toll on the temporary buildings used as classrooms by Loughborough unit.

The ceiling of one building has collapsed, causing water to seep through onto rope, shackles, buoyancy aids and the bow of a boat used as a training aid since the 1980s.

The second cabin has also suffered water damage.

The loss of these spaces for storage is bad enough, but the unit – which has a very small main building – relied on the cabins as teaching spaces for its 47 cadets aged between ten and 17.

They were also used for accommodation for occasional sleepovers, which can no longer take place.

At a recent bag-packing fundraising event at Tesco in Melton Mowbray, cadets raised more than £600, but that will only make a small dent in the sum needed to replace the buildings, which cost around £2,500 second-hand.

The unit is now appealing to local firms to help the cadets reach their target.

Intervention and iconoclasts

FOR three weeks in July 1919, the British Empire was officially at war with Bolshevik Russia.

This was the height of an 'intervention' which had begun the previous year in an attempt to shore up resistance by the new regime to the enemy and protect the vast quantities of war supplies sent to Russia by sea but which was still stockpiled in the far north and Vladivostok because of the inadequacies of the Russian transport and distribution system.

After the Bolsheviks made peace with Germany and its allies, the intervention moved into a campaign against both the Bolsheviks and, in the Baltic, Germans who were trying to use the revolutionary chaos to create Baltic states which would be German puppets, writes Prof Eric Grove of the University of Salford.

Counsels were divided in London. Some – notably Winston Churchill – were anxious to destroy the new Russian regime while others, including Prime Minister Lloyd George, recognised the lack of national enthusiasm for a renewed conflict and the significant sympathy from the political left for the cause of a 'socialist' government.

The fundamental barbarity of the Bolsheviks was still not clear – to outsiders at least, if not the masses murdered by the Red Army and the Communist secret police.

This uncertain and confused situation was almost made for the flexible use of British sea power to sustain British interests as the latter themselves were reinterpreted in London.

In July 1919 the four monitors, four river gunboats and a dozen coastal motor boats (CMBs) were on the River Dvina and Lake Onega in northern Russia supporting a mixed force of Britons, Australians and White Russians.

A tug and a barge provided with armament and crews from the Vladivostok-based cruisers Kent and Suffolk (whose names the gunboats took) had been in action as part of White Russian force 6,000 miles from the sea on the Kama River in central Russia and were just being withdrawn.

A flotilla of armed merchantmen (one converted into a seaplane carrier) and CMBs (four carried in a pair of larger vessels) grappled with Bolshevik destroyers in the Caspian Sea.

Powerful forces including battleships were in the Black Sea having supported the most successful 'Whites' under General Denikin (whose forces, supported by RAF aircraft in Russian markings were within bombing range of Moscow by October).

The Grove Review

And a force of CMBs was being sent to reinforce Admiral Cowan's cruiser, destroyer, submarine and seaplane carrier force in the Baltic in preparation for the successful attack on the Bolshevik fleet at Kronstadt the following month.

The above snapshot is taken from an excellent new history of the Royal Navy's part in these operations, *For Them The War Was Not Over* by Michael Wilson (The History Press, £16.99 ISBN 978-0-7524-4699-8).

The author expresses his debt to his former colleagues at the Naval Historic Branch, Jock Gardner and the late David Brown, reference to the latter revealing the work must have been under way for some time. The bibliography is a little on the sparse side and one wonders if other sources have been used as the account is remarkably complete and comprehensive.

It covers air operations also, quite aptly as many of the RAF personnel and machines used were former RNAS and RN aircraft carriers were used to give them both mobility and support.

There is also coverage of British ground forces, notably 21st Battalion of the Middlesex Regiment, a picture whose disembarkation from Vladivostok is included and which is also reproduced on the back cover.

These 'C2' personnel – never intended for action – included one Pte Edward Grove, the reviewer's grandfather. I wonder if he is one of the troops, dressed in their solar topees, coming down the gangway of SS Ping Suey in the photograph.

Michael Wilson's book must be the starting point for anyone trying to understand a series of operations whose multi-dimensional complexity is bewildering. There are a few mistakes here and there, for example, the picture of the destroyer leader HMS Shakespeare captioned as one of the smaller S class.

Discussion of pay as a factor in the unrest in British naval ranks ought also to have been connected with the generous 1919 rates that were granted that year precisely to prevent such incidents; it was, of course, the attempt to reverse this generosity in 1931 that led to the Invergordon Mutiny.

There were a few outbreaks of RN unrest, notably connected with the Baltic operations, but nothing as serious as the major mutiny in the French ships of Sevastopol in April 1919. The mutinous crews

demanded early return to France. Red flags were raised on some ships, including the battleship France which was sent back to Toulon for its mutineers to face trial. The other ships returned to duty but only on condition they went back home soon and were not used, like the British battleships, to support the Whites.

Thus were France's ambitions in the Crimea, allocated to its sphere of influence by Allied agreement, nipped in the bud by the left-wing sympathies of her personnel, the ground forces also being not much more keen to fight the Bolsheviks. The Greeks were much more keen to fight and there were clashes ashore with the French, culminating in a near battle between the French ships and the Greek battleship Lemnos that had hanged a French seaman in effigy.

All of this added to the chaos faced by the Royal Navy, whose Mediterranean Fleet Commander arrived personally in HMS Iron Duke to ensure the Russian Black Sea Fleet was so disabled that it could be of no use to any successors. As noted above the British Fleet (supported by the Greeks) also went into action to assist the Whites and contain the Reds as well as evacuating 36,000 people from Sevastopol when it had to be abandoned.

Evacuation of those who could be saved from the new regime was the final dimension of a doomed campaign in which the Royal Navy acquitted itself well.

The author is highly critical of the whole exercise in terms of its strategic direction but in the long view it does have its positive benefits in the freedom enjoyed by the Baltic states today and the numerous refugees who escaped Red terror and murder.

Sadly there was not the political will, either at home or in Russia, to prevent the setting-up of the most murderous regime in Europe's history – but at least we tried.

All potential readers will learn something from this excellent and well-illustrated account. Given the quality and interest of its contents this makes it one of the most cost-effective books to have appeared over the last year.

It fully lives up to its publisher's description of being a "captivating history" and is highly recommended.

As for H P Willmott's *The Last Century of Sea Power*, volume one, *From Port Arthur to Chanak, 1894-1922* (Indiana University Press, £22.99 ISBN 978-0-253-35214-9), it's a strange book.

Its author, 'Ned' Willmott, a former Sandhurst lecturer who has since held visiting academic appointments in the USA but has now returned to England to write, seems to like neither navies nor their historians.

The introduction tells us that the polemical title is a reflection

of navies now being third in the pecking order after armies and air forces with "obvious question marks against future role and capability". He likes his fellow historians even less, indeed he dismisses us out of hand. The book asserts that "mendacity, the arrangement of evidence to support a preconceived conclusion, is the necessary hallmark of the historian," and that other hallmarks are "dishonesty, disingenuousness and selectivity." I, for one, will ignore the insult.

Given this negative approach to his colleagues it is unsurprising that there is an extraordinary lack of engagement with the remarkably rich mass of work that serious naval historians have been producing over the last few decades, not least in this country. The extensive footnotes have some remarkable gaps in whom and what they cite and the bibliography is 'select' indeed.

In his revealing introduction, the author tells us why he began his promised naval trilogy of which this is the first volume. He tilts at three particular windmills: a mistaken approach to the U-boat war that has apparently concentrated on U-boat losses alone; the lack of perception about the exact point of Japan's defeat; and the apparent subordination of the modern US Navy: "by 2003 the US Marine Corps had its own Navy" (a dismissive phrase he repeats rather too often).

He thus wished to produce an account that "deliberately set aside full and proper consideration of those aspects of the wars at sea that have been afforded full, one is tempted to say over-full consideration in most histories". Happily, the book steers clear of the gunnery obsession that has been perhaps the major weakness of the new naval history but its coverage of this important matter shows little depth of understanding.

Despite its claim to explain events rather than just describe them, the volume is a chronological and detailed narrative of naval activities from the Sino-Japanese War of 1894-95 to the aftermath of WW1 and the Chanak crisis with Turkey in 1921.

There are some crude expressions used here and there that should have no place in a serious work of scholarship from an academic press, useful though they may have been in trying to keep sleepy Sandhurst cadets awake in the lecture theatre.

There is also a tendency to confuse analytical originality with sheer perversity. Criticisms and claims are too often made in extreme terms. Few – not even Jellicoe or Beatty – would have agreed that Jutland was an

"overwhelming British victory". How this overly positive analysis fits with the book's general, and most unfair, dismissal of the intellectual capacities of naval officers in general and British ones in particular is unclear.

There are good points too, though. Other than its general weight of information, a particularly strong feature of the volume is its discussion of convoy and merchant shipping in WW1.

There are excellent and most useful tables on the structure of British maritime trade; the gains and losses in the shipping of the major allied and neutral powers during the war; the limited scale of convoy escorts; convoys and losses from May 1917 to November 1918; overall U-boat and shipping losses; and ocean and coastal convoy sailings and losses.

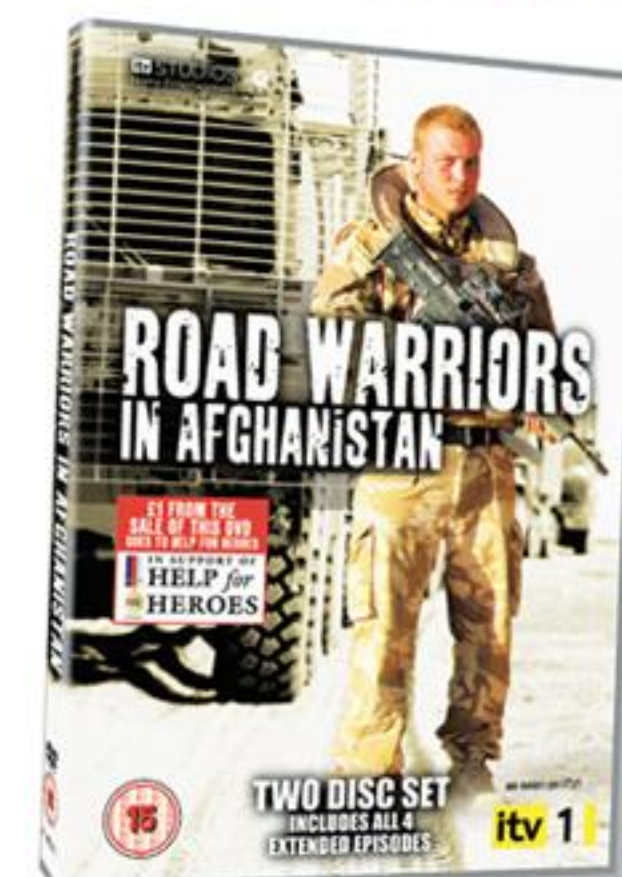
The lesson is clear. Convoy was not the major preoccupation of the Allied navies in terms of assets used as escorts. But it prevented British defeat and was the foundation of Allied victory. In this I heartily agree with Dr Willmott, as I have done on many things over the years. I hope he will not mind.

This remains, nevertheless, a most frustrating work. A great deal of research has clearly gone into it and it contains much of value. Yet the effect is spoiled by the sheer self-indulgence of its overall approach. One cannot expect to enhance one's reputation where it matters by attacking and studiously ignoring one's fellow practitioners. Also it seems strange to spend so much time studying a subject with which one is so unsympathetic.

The dismissal of the future relevance of navies places far too much weight on the strategic context of the recent past and too little on the likely medium-term future of contending sea powers promised by the rise of the Indian and Chinese navies and the coming struggle to control the Indian Ocean, never mind a likely Chinese-US confrontation over Taiwan in the Pacific and the need to use sea power to protect the vulnerable peripheries of NATO from the wounded Russian bear.

Questions about the broader future utility of navies only seem obvious to those with axes to grind who ignore basic strategic realities – but that probably makes this reviewer a mere 'commentator' if not 'mendacious' and 'dishonest'.

Despite its general idiosyncrasies and weaknesses, this has enough merits to be worth buying volume two – due imminently – should be interesting but, one fears, equally odd and, for us 'commentators' at least, infuriating. But, knowing Ned of old, I suspect that is the idea.



Top convoy action

... OR MORE accurately top combat logistics patrol action, because 'convoy' is an inaccurate term in modern military parlance.

If you didn't catch ITV's *Road Warriors* on the telly recently (or perhaps if you did) you can now watch it at leisure at home on DVD.

The programme follows the hitherto largely unsung work of logistics teams in Afghanistan, running (or rather driving) the gauntlet of Taliban ambushes to deliver vital supplies to front-line units scattered across Helmand province.

TV cameras spent three months in theatre with the loggies during the summer of 2009 (just after 3 Cdo Bde's deployment ended).

All four episodes of the documentary, plus some extra bits, feature on two three-hour discs, available now for £19.99 RRP. £1 from each copy sold goes to Help for Heroes.

■ We have five copies of the DVD to give away courtesy of those nice folk at ITV.

Just tell us the name of the principal British base in Helmand, near Lashkar Gah.

Send your answer to Navy News, Leviathan Block, HMS Nelson, Portsmouth, PO1 3HH or email it to roadwarriors@navynews.co.uk

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Ted was quick on the draw

THIS is how the Royal Navy became masters of the North African shores once more... at least in the eyes of one PTI.

During a two-decade career spanning WW2 and the early Cold War, Ted Macey – aka Ted of the Med and Clubz of the Cossack – penned upwards of 150 cartoons, depicting the lighter side of life in the Senior Service.

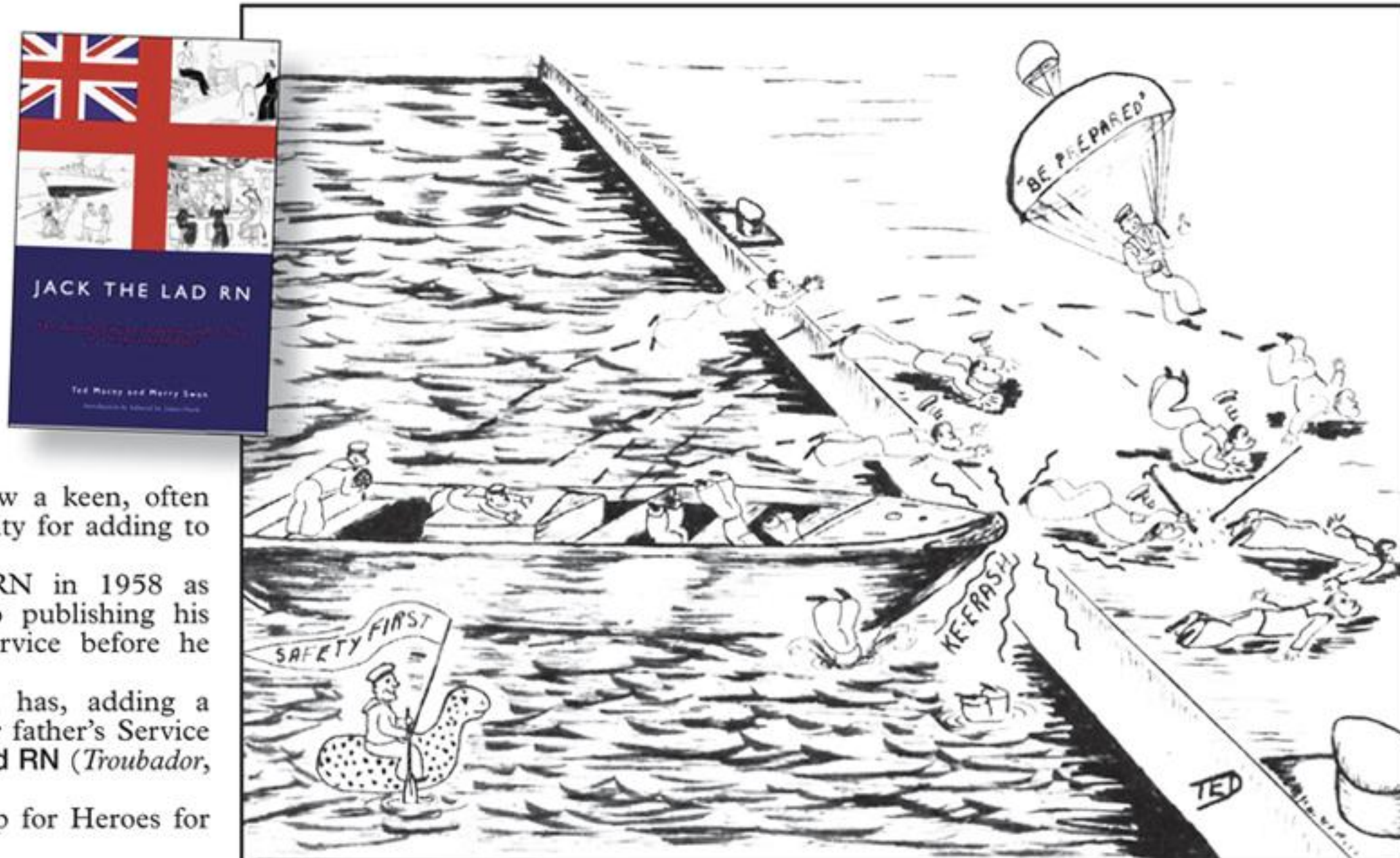
He also wrote quite a few poems/ditties (some of which you wouldn't repeat to your mum... or maybe you would).

While some may have dated, others do raise a smile – and show a keen, often acerbic eye (such as Jack's propensity for adding to the 'baby boom').

Ted, who eventually left the RN in 1958 as a lieutenant, never got around to publishing his humorous take on the Senior Service before he passed away.

But his daughter Merry Swan has, adding a collection of short stories about her father's Service career in the charming *Jack the Lad RN* (Troubadour, £10.99 ISBN 978-184876-1896).

A donation will be made to Help for Heroes for each copy sold.



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Hard WIRC for rowers

Continued from page 48

24.3s, slightly slower than her best time of the previous 12 months.

The men's heavyweight 30-39 category featured three Senior Service rowers all of whom achieved personal bests: Lt Cdr Derek Powles (COMPORFLOT) prepared for the event with a wide range of endurance training and reaped the reward with 21st place in 6m 36.1s; WO1 Spencer Sheppard (DSTL Portsdown) finished 30th in 6m 52.3s, successfully converting nervous apprehension into delivery of strength and power; CPOET (MESM) Barry Greig (HMS Vanguard) followed up his victory in the Scottish Indoor Rowing Championships (see below), to finish 15th in 6m 29.7s – his first sub 6m 30s time; he has the capacity to go much faster if he can continue to train and further refine his technique.

The men's heavyweight 40-49 Category featured two of Navy's more experienced 'ergers', both of whom had previously competed at this event. POPT Alistair 'Dick' Treacy (BRNC/Sultan AIB) was seeded in the top 16 and thus was in a prime position on the front rank as he finished 13th in 6m 28.8s. Lt Cdr Jules Stevenson (DSTL Portsdown) just missed out on the top seeding group (he prefers it that way), as he gave his usual totally-committed performance, complete with obvious painful and dramatic conclusion, to finish 15th in 6m 33.9s; giving due consideration to age and weight, this was probably the best performance by a Royal Navy rower at the championships.

Lt Louise Storey (NBC Devonport) posted a personal best to finish 18th in the women's 30-39 heavyweight race. Not far short of being eligible to race as a lightweight, her improvement from previous performances was the result of committing to a dedicated training regime.

Another rower who benefited from application and commitment to training was Lt Doug Wylie (HMS Temeraire), setting a good example as he achieved his first sub-seven-minute 2k time of 6m 58.7s to finish 18th in the men's 50-54 heavyweight. Lt Wylie has spent a lifetime involved in RN Sport, including membership of Field Gun Teams (both Royal Tournament and Brickwood's), but a short while after his rowing race he was quoted thus: "That's the hardest thing I've ever done!"

Also competing in the same category was Cdr Martin Claxton (NBC Clyde), who unfortunately picked up a heavy cold travelling to the event, so he was unable to exert his usual controlled effort to just beat the aforementioned Lt Wylie, as he finished 28th in 7m 17s. Team Manager Paul Winton (MCTA) followed up his fifth place in the European Championships to finish 12th in this category with a time of 6m 44.5s.

Before heading to Boston, CPO Greig could be found in Edinburgh with three Vanguard shipmates at the Scottish championships.

All four submariners posted personal bests, with CPO Greig's 2m 58.3s enough to take the men's heavyweight 30-39 1,000m sprint title, beating off a strong challenge from Sergei Suvoroff of Marine Tec University (Russia).

CPO John Eales also competed in this category and finished in a creditable fifth place.

The men's open 2,000m sprint featured AB Paul Deacon, the fastest Vanguard competitor finishing in 30th place on 6m 57.3s. He was followed 2.3s later by shipmate LS Dion Broadfoot in 33rd position.

All four Vanguards rowed in the 2,000m team relay sprint – and grabbed bronze, just pipping Team Handsome to third place with a time of 5m 48.2s.

RN indoor rowing teams are planning to compete in regional, national and international events over the next two years. Details from Paul Winton on 9380 23644.



● The Brothers' Lee Jones attempts to penetrate the Blackpool Panthers' line during the RNRL's third-round cup defeat

Picture: LA(Phot) Alex Cave, FRPU East

Brothers mauled by Panthers

THE Navy's Rugby League journey in this year's Carnegie Challenge Cup came to an end at the hands of Co-op National League side Blackpool Panthers.

Despite not being in the highest echelons of the Championship, the Panthers were a well-drilled, experienced side based around veteran prop Andy Hobson who was at the heart of their performance, writes WO1 Keith Humpleby, RNRL spokesman.

Royal Navy Director of Coaching WO1 Wayne Okell was full of praise for his team's performance as they refused to take a backward step against the visitors from the North-West.

Things looked very grim for the home side: the Brothers found themselves 12-0 down after barely six minutes.

The RNRL regrouped and fought their way back into the game and were rewarded by a good score from John Humphrey who was

quickest to respond to Botwood's grubber kick. Provider Botwood turned scorer putting over an excellent conversion almost from the touchline.

The Panthers' No.3 Casey Mayberry scored the second of his hat-trick to ease his side further ahead at 16-6 but again the Brothers responded magnificently.

A great score for Tom Boyce at left centre was the highlight of an impressive 20-minute period before the break; his touchdown between the posts gave Botwood an easy conversion and at the break it was 16-12 to the visitors.

The re-introduction of prop Hobson settled the Panthers again and they began the second half as they did the first: with an all-out assault on the Brothers line was rewarded with a succession of converted tries to settle the match.

Once again the Brothers refused to lie down

and great work across the field especially in the pack meant the Panthers knew they had been in a battle.

Manasa Tamoi looked to have scored a brilliant try as he plucked the ball out of the sky from a midfield bomb but Referee Everitt adjudged the ball to have been knocked on so the score was not given.

A couple more tries, including Mayberry's third, gave a somewhat flattering 50-12 score in favor of the Lancashire outfit but the Brothers had the last word.

A break on the Navy's right from inside their own half saw the ball go out wide to Aaron Hansen who beat the first defender and sprinted for the line with two defenders closing on him, neat footwork saw him evade the defence to give his team and the RNRL faithful a great end to the match as the Brothers went down 50-16.

RM take CC spoils

THE Royal Marines once again showed that they are a force to be reckoned with during the annual RN Cross Country Championships held on HMS Raleigh's revamped course.

Cpl Brian Cole (Stoke AFCO) showed his strength as one of the best UK ultra-distance runners to take the senior men's title, beating Cpl Mike Wilshire (40 Cdo) into second place.

The veteran's competition was won by Cpl Mark Croasdale (Carlisle AFCO). He crossed the finish line just 30 seconds ahead of Lt Cdr Tony Dunn (RNAS Culdrose).

Mne Aiden Redmille (42 Cdo) won the junior men's title for the second year running, completing the course in just 19 minutes.

Reigning champion Lt Linda Lawrence (RNAS Culdrose) was the winner of the ladies event in a time of 21m 6s, narrowly beating Raleigh's LPT Julie Stroud. Both ladies contributed to the overall win for Western Command.

Incorporating the Inter-Command Championships, in total 60 competitors took part in the event.

The new course is far more challenging than in previous years and has been prepared to a very high standard by Rob Newcombe, Raleigh's groundsman. Feedback from all competitors was very positive.

The ladies and junior men ran one lap of the 4.8km course, while senior men and veterans completed two laps.

Fairway action for naval fliers

THE China Fleet Golf and Country Club in Saltash is the venue for this year's RN Air Command Championships over three days next month.

Cost for the May 19-21 event is £130 including food, accommodation and the all-important golf.

The competition is open to all serving FAA personnel, plus sailors and marines involved with all aspects of naval aviation.

Details from tournament director CPO (ACMN) 'Pip' Piper on 93781 6348 (mil) or 01326 556348 or 829nas-cacmn@mod.uk. Closing date for interest is April 25.



Red hot Sussex

The Inter-URNU sports weekend – one of the highlights of the University Royal Naval Unit calendar – took place at HMS Temeraire with all URNUs gathering for two days of (mostly) friendly competition and a chance to showcase their team spirit.

Inter-unit rivalry was strong with every URNU proudly displaying its mascot as the units gathered in the sports hall or rugby and hockey pitches to support their players, writes Lt Conor O'Neill, CO HMS Tracker.

Some teams – it was rumoured – had been training for months, others had decided several days before to try their hand at sports they hadn't played since school.

Either way, the competition was fierce, with all eyes firmly on the winner's cup which would be awarded based on aggregated scores from all the sports.

The excellent weather on the first day only heightened the enthusiasm of the rugby, hockey and sailing teams, with large crowds gathered to support the players.

Despite heavy rain the following day, and a need to move the rugby to a different pitch, the teams performed admirably (and returned caked in mud to prove it), and morale remained high throughout.

The rugby saw a massive upset as Northumbria's team beat the long-term custodians of the cup, Wales, in a closely-fought final which saw HMS Example's CO, Lt Nelson McMillan, getting stuck in on the pitch.

London URNU's rowing team of Mid David Crocker and Mid Jenny Clow triumphed in a close event, not least thanks to Mid Crocker's significant height advantage.

Saturday night witnessed an '80s disco social in HMS Nelson organised by Sussex URNU, providing those who hadn't played sport to get some exercise on the dancefloor, and those who had a chance to relax and socialise after a tiring day. The evening raised £500 for the charity Afghan Heroes.

The overall results were very tight, with only a few points between the top five teams.

Sussex were triumphant, with consistency of results across the board, followed closely by Wales and Bristol.

In the individual sports, the rugby was won by Northumbria (with Bristol as plate winners), hockey by Liverpool (with Southampton as plate winners), netball by Wales (plate winners Sussex), rowing and shooting by London, and sailing by Glasgow.

● Mids Harry Moores and Andy Ormerod-Cloke (Oxford) challenge Southampton's Lt Tom Weaver for the ball

Picture: Kelly Smith



● RN coach POPT Stu O'Connor offers some advice to featherweight AB Glenn Coe
Picture: AET Richie Price

Boxers enjoy Swede dreams

AS PREPARATION for the Combined Service Championships, the Royal Navy Boxing Team ventured overseas to gain valuable experience both in Jersey and Sweden this weekend.

The senior team took part in the multi-national Rinkeby-Tensta Box Cup in Stockholm against top-ranking opposition from Sweden, Norway and Denmark, while the second team faced Jersey's best boxers.

Eight open-class boxers faced tough opposition in the Rinkeby-Tensta Box Cup.

Chosen specifically to box on their 'Super-Fight Night', five RN boxers faced opposition ranked in the top three in their respective countries.

In the semi-finals LPT Gareth Smith (BRNC) faced Swedish No.2 Martin Steinberg. After an aggressive bout, Smith shone through to book his place in the final.

ET(WE) Mark Flowers (Ark Royal) faced 'local hero' and international boxer Michael Obin. Having offered the Swede a true boxing lesson, rocking him with heavy shots, Mark amazingly lost the bout on a majority decision – a questionable judging trend which affected the team throughout the tournament.

It was a similar story for young ET(ME) Antony Smith (St Albans) – a big ask put him against far more experienced international Lars Nilsson.

Again delivering the Swede a boxing lesson, Smith rarely took a shot – making his opponent continually miss and punishing him. But once again he somehow lost on a majority decision.

LA(WT) Jason Rogers (Lancaster) faced three-times national champion Stephen Ablor. The RN boxer dominated from the start, rocking his opponent with heavy shots he made it impossible for the judges to give it any other way than in the Rogers' favour, they did so but again on a majority.

The super-fight night resulted in four Navy boxers through to the final. LPT Gareth Smith squared up to K Jansson in an exciting bout which caught the attention of all spectators, unrelenting pressure from Smith ensured a win for the gold and a trophy for best fighter of the tournament.

Lt Lucy O'Connor faced Swedish No1 Lillea Strandell – a tactical bout with the officer dominating thanks to her longer reach. O'Connor was awarded the gold medal but again only on a majority but was presented with the best female boxer award.

And so the RN team returned from Scandinavia with two golds, three silvers, best fighter and best boxer of the tournament. "I couldn't have asked more from the boxers – they entirely dominated this tournament with their boxing ability and fitness – this was an invaluable experience for all," said coach POPT Stuart O'Connor.

Meanwhile five RN fighters headed to Jersey. AB Ross Murray (Illustrious) put on an impressive display of boxing, proving elusive and catching his opponent on the counter but came out on the wrong end of the decision.

Mne Ant Graham (40 Cdo) dominated his opponent from the start with relaxed shots which his opponent was unable to answer, resulting in a well-deserved victory for the green beret.

Fellow commando Matt Armstrong faced a challenge having moved up in weight class. After fathoming out his opponent early in the first round he landed a big right hand to floor his foe for a convincing win.

Mne Jay Gardiner was involved in a tight bout: three rounds of toe-to-toe action ended with the Royal's superior fitness, grit and determination ensuring he was crowned the victor.

Finally SAC Judd Allen (RNAS Yeovilton) faced a much heavier opponent who didn't allow the Navy boxer to throw his punches and was awarded a points decision.



● Pete's back... L/Cpl Pete Dunning races down the slope at Meribel

Picture: PO(Phot) Donny Osmond, FRPU North

Podium Pete battles back

FOUR members of the Combined Services Disabled Ski Team took on allcomers with extraordinary success this season at the Divisional, Army Alpine and Combined Services Winter Sports Association Inter-Service Ski And Snowboard Competition (ISSC), writes Maj Martin Colclough, OC BattleBack.

Sgt Mick Brennan (Royal Signals) who lost both legs above the knee in a suicide bomb blast in Iraq in 2004 and L/Cpl Pete Dunning (Royal Marines) who lost both legs in a mine blast in Afghanistan in 2008 both raced on mono skis in the Divisional Alpine Championships in Les Contamines, France.

In the Individual Super G Competition, Mick came 66th whilst Pete came 89th out of 124 racers on uncorrected times and Mick achieved 73rd and Pete 101st again out of 124 racers in the seeded Giant Slalom Race.

Capt Martin Hewitt (Parachute Regiment), who was shot through the shoulder joint in Afghanistan in 2007, and Tpr Stevie Shine (Royal Tank Regiment), who lost his left leg in an Improvised Explosive Device incident in Iraq in 2007, then joined Mick and Pete at the Army Alpine Championships in Serre Chevalier, France.

Unfortunately Mick had a bad fall on the downhill. He came out of his rig, spiralled across the piste and broke his nose but despite being shaken, bruised and needing four stitches in his nose he escaped serious injury but had to withdraw from the race. Despite this set-back Martin, Mick and Pete all raced in the Super G event achieving speeds of 59, 57 and 54 mph respectively over the finish line.

All four athletes then went on to compete in the Combined Services ski and snowboard.

As this was Pete's first season skiing, he was not entered in the downhill but he had a fantastic result on combination race day (one run of both Super G

and Slalom) completing both runs and taking second place on the podium.

In the combination race, skiers mount the podium if they finish in the top three, but as the race is run in reverse-finish order the slower skiers are first down and are usually displaced by the faster ones.

Nevertheless, Pete's shout of joy and enormous smile were priceless as he shunned offers to lift his rig onto the podium preferring instead to dive on top of it still in his rig, mounted on a single ski.

Every member of the team has been wounded in action on operations and suffered horrific injuries. They have all been through rehabilitation at Headley Court, and now lead a largely independent life within the Forces.

They have faced extraordinary levels of pain simply to learn to ski at Novice standard. To race at their current level of competition, they have had to push themselves to an extraordinary extent; they have broken their good limbs and in some cases aggravated their original wounds.

All have overcome remarkable adversity just to learn to ski and although they have already achieved truly remarkable results, this is just the beginning of the experience as they are all focussed on the truly demanding but achievable goal of becoming good enough to represent their country in the Winter Olympics in 2014.

Alpine ski racing has made a huge difference to the lives of all the athletes and is open to all Services.

If you would like to know more about Adaptive Skiing and Racing or any other disabled sport in which you would like to participate, please go to the BattleBack website, www.army.mod.uk/events/sport/16267.aspx, or contact Maj Colclough at BattleBack, DMRC, Headley Court, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 6JW

Royals are kings of the ice

GREEN triumphed on white as the Royal Marines became the inaugural winners of the RN Ice Hockey Cup.

More than 40 skaters crossed the Solent bound for Planet Ice in Ryde on the Isle of Wight, with competitors split into two divisions, writes Lt Cdr Al Bernard.

The Royal Marines narrowly defeated the Navy 9-7 in a fast-paced and exciting match in the top-flight A Division while a combined Fleet Air Arm and Royal Marines team defeated the 'Rest of Navy' 4-1 in the B Division.

The tournament was a huge success and highlights the maturity and development of the sport in the Royal Navy over the past few years.

The RN Cup will become a yearly fixture used to showcase the best of Navy ice hockey talent and allow numerous new players to further develop their skills.

Senior Service skaters were also in action in three other games.

The representative side travelled to Gillingham where they defeated the Invicta Knights 7-4 in a close physical contest in front of support from the local RNR, RMR and cadet units, despite an unsociable face-off time.

The Navy overcame a first-period two-goal deficit with five unanswered goals in the second on their way to victory against the Kent side.

Navy goalie, Mne Carl Edwards (SFSG) was once again strong in the net while Mnes Karl Sullivan (UKLF CSG AD Tp) and Adam Hankins (FPGRM) were the top point-getters with three goals and six assists respectively.

The most recent representative clash was a real humdinger against the Gosport Scorpions.

The RN gifted the Scorpions three own goals as they trailed 7-1 half-way through the second period.

Cue the comeback of all comebacks. By the third period, the two teams were locked at 9-9... until Adam Hawkins (FPGRM) popped up with a blistering snapshot to clinch a dramatic Senior Service win.

The developmental side took to the ice in Bracknell against their Army counterparts.

The Navy had won the previous encounter in Gosport 9-3, but had difficulty clearing their zone in this clash, and would eventually lose 9-4.

The game was still hugely useful,

allowing novice and intermediate players to get good quality ice time against similar-strength opponents. Developmental side games will make up a significant part of RNIHA fixtures this season in an attempt to attract more players and develop a sound base to the sport in the senior service.

Game scores and all RN ice hockey news is available through the RNIHA website www.rniha.org.uk and the association's fan page/group on Facebook.

U23s make history

Continued from page 48

brilliantly saved by the visiting keeper.

Indeed, despite the best efforts of both sides in the second period, the score remained fixed at 2-1 to the RN.

A great run by Gary Hampson saw his shot hit the post and rebound to safety with the keeper well beaten. Seconds later RN keeper Jim Mullen had to be on his toes to make a fine save from the visitors' forward.

Pulling power at Dartmouth

CLAY pigeon shooting is back on the agenda at BRNC after an overhaul of facilities.

Lt Chris Newman was determined to get the sport back on track when he joined the staff at Dartmouth.

After returning from his time as a divisional officer with Initial Fleet Time cadets, Chris, along with CPO Bill Amery, the International and Squadron Support Senior Rate – and a fellow keen shot – set about restoring the range.

"To start with there was a lot of self-help gardening that we had to get done," said Chris.

"We needed to clear away quite a bit of overgrown scrub and foliage to ensure that a clear view of the clays could be achieved.

"I've been shooting since the age of ten," Chris explained. "Lots of practice is the only way to become proficient in the sport and it is a great way to enjoy being in the fresh air."

After refurbishing the springing teal and crossing target clay traps, everything was set for Cdre Jake Moores, Commodore BRNC, to take the official first shot.

"Throughout training cadets face many challenges which have to be underpinned with an awareness of safety routines," said CPO Amery.

"Respect for the rifle and strict safety protocol is at the root of this sport so it complements training development very well."

At present the range is open on Wednesday afternoons, but now lighter evenings are here, the cry of "pull" is likely to be heard on a more regular basis.

Big fish, big pond

SAILORS from Faslane travelled to Loch Eive at Taynuilt, near Oban, for some deep sea fishing.

The fishing trip was part of a series of 'grassroots' sporting events introducing RN and RM to less-known sports and pastimes open to them in the Forces.

Although the weather was unkind initially with rain and snow blizzards in the morning, by 11am the day had cleared leaving the afternoon open for some extreme fishing.

Loch Eive holds a variety of species – cod, spur dog, lesser spotted dogfish, mackerel, pollock, gurnard and whiting. Experienced angler PO Warren Malcolm made sure that the group was well prepared, using a 'ruby dubby' (fish stew), which was mashed and hung over the side of the boat to lure the fish.

PO Chris Bell was the first angler to get a bite on the day, catching a young thornback ray which set a high standard for the others.

PO Malcolm soon followed with another thornback, and CPO Steve Losh was not far behind, catching the group's first shark of the day – a young spur dog.

It was novice PO Jamie Cockfield who stole the show, catching the only cod of the day.

Green vs Red

THE two elite units in Britain's regular Forces lock horns on April 1 as the Rugby League Taffalgar Cup is up for grabs once more.

The regular clash between the Royal Marines and Parachute Regiment will serve as the curtain-raiser to the Super League showdown between Leeds Rhinos and Bradford Bulls at Leeds' Headingley Stadium.

On the six occasions that the cup has been contested, the Royals have triumphed four times, while last year the trophy was shared following a 26-26 draw.

Kick-off is 5pm on Maundy Thursday with tickets available from www.therhinos.co.uk or 0844 248 6651, quoting the code LRHFH01; 50 per cent of the proceeds will be shared among Help for Heroes, and RM/Para charities.

Next month



Cradle of life – a spot of disaster relief training for HMS Manchester



Gore values – preparing sailors for the horrors of Helmand



The Navy's here – the revolution in board and search training



SPORT



● RN U23 skipper LPT Ross McEvoy tries to evade an Army challenge during the Navy's 3-0 triumph

Picture: LA(Phot) Jay Allen, FRPU East

U23s make history

A CLOSE-fought victory over the RAF and a trouncing of the Army ensured the U23s made history by lifting the Inter-Service title for the first time.

A week-long training camp in Gibraltar (with two 3-0 victories against local/Service opposition) proved the perfect preparation for the impending Inter-Service clashes.

Barely were the team back from the Med than they were heading to RAF Cosford to face an Air Force side which had annihilated the Army 5-1.

After just six minutes, skipper LPT Ross McEvoy (Caledonia) found himself in space and drove a 35-yard screamer into the top right-hand corner leaving the RAF keeper stranded.

The RAF responded and attempted to stretch the game with balls from distance to their centre-forward to hold, inviting support from midfield.

The RN central defensive pairing of AET Buckler (RNAS Culdrose) and Mne Sampson (42 Cdo) coped admirably and cancelled out any threat.

A change was forced on the RN line up when ETME Stockton (Daring) received a serious injury resulting in a trip to A&E but the team stuck to their game plan and were rewarded with a fantastic strike from the left boot of AB McLoughlin (Vanguard) direct from a free kick in the 35th minute and the RN were two goals to the good.

The continued hard work was further rewarded with a third goal in the 42nd minute from AET Musumeci (RNAS Yeovilton) and the Navy were firmly in the driving seat.

A momentary lapse of concentration from the RN keeper allowed the RAF to claw a goal back immediately before half time.



Onside with Lt Cdr Neil Horwood, RNFA

The second half started brightly once again with AET Brookes (820 NAS) and LPT McEvoy bossing things in central midfield ably supported by McLoughlin and LAET Philp (RNAS Culdrose) supporting in the wide midfield positions.

The RAF game plan continued with good service from their flank players to their target man but with the RN defensive centre half pairing remaining strong and excellent pressure from the Navy full backs, LPT Kerr (Neptune) and NA Devlin (Ark Royal) the Navy soaked up the RAF pressure.

The Air Force were reduced to ten men with 15 minutes to go and although they managed to grab a second goal from a corner, they could not force an equaliser; the RN held on for a well-deserved 3-2 win.

And so to perfect conditions at Burnaby Road and the visit of the Army.

The Navy midfield soon began to get the ball out to the feet of the wide players in the channels. As the RN players continued to apply pressure, AET Isaksen drove forward down the right and fired a fierce shot which the Army keeper could only parry. AB McLoughlin was on hand to power home the loose ball and give the RN a 1-0 lead after 22 minutes.

The soldiers attempted to strike back but a commanding performance by ET Kenaley in goal ensured the pressure was absorbed whilst the RN forwards of AET Musumeci and LMEA Hodgson (Vanguard) worked tirelessly chasing down the ball in the attacking third.

The second half saw the opposition growing increasingly frustrated. Gaps started to appear

in their defensive third and LMEA Hodgson was on hand to strike at goal from distance with a deflection leaving the Army keeper stranded on 63 minutes.

The third goal came from a piece of individual genius by the RN centre-half AB Russell who carried the ball a full 30 yards, cutting through the Army midfield before slotting an inch-perfect ball through the advancing defence with the outside of his right boot for LMEA Hodgson to finish with a quality drive across the keeper into the top corner on 70 minutes, ensuring the 3-0 victory was complete.

Huge celebrations greeted the final whistle as the RN were crowned Inter-Service Champions for 2009/2010 for the first time having finally broken the Army's grip on the trophy.

Elsewhere, the RN ladies earned a highly-creditable 2-2 draw against their Army counterparts at Aldershot Military Stadium courtesy of strikes from RPO Mitch Garrett and LPT Nat.

And the RN veterans grabbed a 2-1 win over Hindhead veterans.

A good turn-out for the Navy saw 21 players available for selection by manager, Ian Rees. The game started with the RN having the best of the opening exchanges, going close in the fifth minute with Steve Johnson putting an easy chance over the bar – repeated three minutes later when a good header just cleared the woodwork.

It took sixteen minutes of play to see the first goal. Man-of-the-match Johnson made amends for his first two misses by giving the RN the lead with a great volley from a Brady corner.

Ten minutes later a rash tackle from young Dutchy Holland gave

Hindhead a free kick mid way into the RN half. The RN defence failed to deal with the cross and the ball fell kindly to the visiting forward who smashed the ball home to equalise.

Undeterred the RN took only two minutes to restore their lead. A great cross from Jamie Cooke found Johnson, who again volleyed home.

Now pressing for a hat-trick, Johnson had a great header

Continued on page 47



● Feel the pain... CPO Barry Greig grimaces as he powers his way to victory in the Scottish indoor championships

Hard WIRC for rowers

THE Royal Navy provided 11 rowers in a 34-strong Team GB contingent at WIRC – the World Indoor Rowing Championships (aka the 'Crash B Sprints') in Boston's Agannis Arena.

These were the 29th annual championships drawing more than 2,000 rowers to the Eastern Seaboard of the USA. At any one time, 108 sportsmen and women were in action, seeded and grouped by age and weight categories into 2,000m races every 20 minutes.

Seven of the 11 RN rowers posted personal best times; the four who did not were more established, longer term competitors who regularly operate at the upper limit of their physical capabilities.

Competition over 2,000m on an indoor rowing machine (ergometer) can be daunting. All who compete – at whatever standard – know that they will have some demons to face through the course of the race, normally in the final third.

The fastest RN rower was LET Ben Bates (HMS Endurance) with a personal best of 6m 26.4s as he finished 89th in the largest and most competitive category, the open men's heavyweight.

LNN Laura Thomasson (MDHU Portsmouth) was also in a very competitive category – women's open lightweight – where she finished 52nd in 8m

Continued on page 46

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